Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance Volume 2

source : https://www.baka-tsuki.org/project/index.php?title=Seirei_Tsukai_no_Blade_Dance:Volume_2

These are most of the illustrations in Volume 2:

【著者】

志瑞祐
しみず・ゆう

(゜∀゜)o彡゜おっぱい！おっぱい！
……すみません。あまりに素晴らしい表紙なのでついとり乱してしまいました。今回も「ラブ増量、面白さ倍増、バトル上等！」を目指してがんばりますので、どうぞよろしくお願いします！

第四回ＭＦ文庫Ｊライトノベル新人賞受賞。なごみ系ケルトコメディ『やってきたよ、ドルイドさん！』シリーズ、お城擬人化ファンタジー『白銀の城姫』シリーズを上梓。写真はメ切前にひとりマニアックなボードゲームで遊ぶ作者（現実逃避中）。

【イラストレーター】

桜はんぺん
さくら・はんぺん

4月6日生まれのゲーム原画家、イラストレーター。原画担当に『さくらビットマップ』（HOOKSOFT）など。
好物は照れ隠しする女の子、しまぱん。
HP「Petite*Cerisier」
http://petitecerisier.moo.jp/

カバーイラスト／桜はんぺん　装丁／百足屋ユウコ（ムシカゴグラフィクス）

精霊使いの剣舞 ブレイドダンス 2

ロスト・クイーン

志瑞祐
Illustration
桜はんぺん

MF文庫 J
L-04-08

精霊使いの剣舞 ブレイドダンス 2
ロスト・クイーン
志瑞祐

MEDIA FACTORY
580

精霊使いの剣舞2

ブレイドダンス

ロスト・クイーン

志瑞祐
Illustration
桜はんぺん

MF文庫J

9784840138246

ISBN978-4-8401-3824-6
C0193 ¥580E

1920193005806

定価：本体580円（税別）
メディアファクトリー

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス）2　ロスト・クイーン

精霊剣舞（ブレイドダンス）祭の開催まで二ヶ月を切った。だが、クレアとカミトたちのチームは、学内ランキングの剣舞祭出場枠にはまったく届かず、そもそも出場に必要なメンバーさえ揃っていなかった。そんな中、学院にオルデシア帝国第二王女、フィアナが編入してくる。かつて火の精霊姫候補だったが、いまはその資格を剥奪されて“喪失の精霊姫（ロスト・クイーン）”と呼ばれている彼女。学院長の依頼により、彼女とカミトたちはとある任務に挑むことになる。だが、カミトに積極的に迫るフィアナの様子に、クレアは内心穏やかではなく、料理対決や背中流し対決が始まり……!?　カミトの過去を知る少女。仲間たちの絆。そして、少女の胸に秘められた想い――。エレメンタル・ファンタジー第２弾！

MF文庫J 志瑞祐の本

やってきたよ、ドルイドさん！1～3［イラスト：絶叫］

白銀の城姫（ベルクフリート）1～3［イラスト：上田夢人］

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス）　剣と学院と火猫少女
［イラスト：桜はんぺん］

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス）2　ロスト・クイーン
［イラスト：桜はんぺん］

精霊使いの剣舞2（ブレイドダンス）
ロスト・クイーン

志瑞祐

MF文庫 J

ロスト・クイーン

精霊使いの剣舞2

志瑞祐

Illustration

桜はんぺん

「...」

AT THAT MOMENT, KAMITO'S MOVEMENTS FROZE.

A BEAUTIFUL, NUDE GIRL WAS SITTING ON HIS CHEST.

「YOU FINALLY WOKE UP, KAMITO.」

EST

KAZEHAYA KAMITO

「風……よ、我が敵を
薙ぎ払え――〈風王爆閃陣（ウィンド・ボムス）〉！」

刹那、放たれた暴風の塊が、
毒の霧をあとかたもなく吹き飛ばした。
そして――

Ellis Fahrengart
エリス・ファーレンガルト

Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance

2

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Prologue

—Three years ago.

"Haa, haa, haa—"

A girl was running through a forest in Astral Zero, full of many twisted trees lined up in rows.

Her shoes had long since slipped off, and the soles of her bare feet were covered with injuries.

Since her long black hair had been done up at both sides of her long-sleeved, extravagant, yet courteous attire, she did not run smoothly.

From behind her, the violent sounds of many trees being mowed down were approaching.

Being caught up was just a matter of time.

(Why did such a thing—)

The girl was invited to view the Blade Dance as the guest of honor of the Ordesia Empire.

Although being called the guest of honor, she was invited as an extra for an excuse.

Falling out of the candidacy of «Divine Ritual Institute »— the Queens' training organization, she was the imperial family's excess baggage.

She had nothing special other than the title of former second princess and the fact that she was just a mere thirteen year-old girl.

Her noble colleagues, who by right should have pledged allegiance to the imperial family, were sending her looks of contempt.

Even the retainer court ladies were ridiculing her behind her back.

A worthless lost queen—

It was painful for her to be at the match venue since she would be exposed to a lot of people's gazes.

That match with Ren Ashbell, which she wanted to see , was held later on in the afternoon and, even if she was gone, there was no one who would be particularly worried.

Therefore, she came to the middle of a forest like this, all alone.

Without knowing how dreadful this place; the forest of Astral Zero, could be.

Approaching her from behind, a tree spirit[1] (Dryad) let out a dreadful roar.

Naturally, the Dryad had the temperament of a docile spirit. Perhaps, it might be angry because she had stepped on and broken the twigs in the forest.

(It's no good, if this keeps up—)

She could not get away— realizing that, she prepared herself.

She stopped at that place, turned around and firmly glared at the Dryad.

"Y...You, if you are my knight, then simply go and beat it—"

Shouting with a shaky voice, she began to recite the summoning spell to summon her contracted spirit.

——Thou servant of the king of the child of man, knight and master swordsman!

——By the contract of the old blood, become the sword that protects me, come forth and do my bidding!

The spirit seal, engraved on the girl's chest, emitted a faint radiance—

However, that was all it did.

Suddenly, the path with her contracted spirit was severed and the seal's radiance vanished.

(...! I thought so, it's already hopeless, I—)

Despair surfaced on the girl's face.

The Dryad let out a roar and swung its log-like arm—

At that moment, a blinding light flashed.

"Eh?"

The girl opened her eyes reflexively.

That Dryad's log-like arm had clearly vanished from her sight.

It was as if time had stopped.

From the cross-section of the severed tree, something like a black fog was emitting out.

And then *Don* there was a sound of someone landing on the ground.

Before the girl's eyes, a single boy was standing.

He had black hair and wore a black vest with a pair of navy blue trousers.

The boy was grasping a jet-black demon sword that emitted black fog.

"Stay still there, it's dangerous."

He told her bluntly and turned toward the spirit before him.

That Dryad, who had its arm cut off, roared in anger and attacked the boy.

As it swung down its other arm, the girl reflexively covered her eyes.

However...

"It isn't going to work on me though, I'm sorry."

The boy was stopping the blow that came from that Dryad with all its might, single-handedly, with one sword.

And then— he exhaled and kicked off the ground at the same time.

With all his strength, he cut off its arm and hit its torso very hard with the center of the sword.

It was a single blow. With merely a single blow, the spirit, which prided itself on its strength, was brought down and became motionless.

"Maybe I overdid it a little. Although, it was my intention to not injure it as much as possible."

"..."

The girl was dumbfounded and the boy turned around .

If she were to describe him, she would call him slender and handsome.

His eyes were so clear that, he could be easily mistaken for a girl of about the same age.

At that very moment, he did not seem like a person who had brought a spirit in the blink of an eye.

Then, the girl suddenly realized.

(Eh? This person, it's like I have seen him somewhere —)

The girl tilted her head to the side.

"Err, are you alright? Do you have any injuries?"

The boy asked in a calm voice.

"Ye...Yeah, I'm fine. You have my gratitude for saving me."

"Is that so... that's good."

The boy took a breath in relief, put down the jet-black demon sword and came walking toward her.

At that moment—

"Ah...!"

The jet-black demon sword emitted black fog— the girl realized its significance and her face turned pale.

That was it. A sword that cuts up spirits could not be an ordinary sword.

(That's an elemental waffe!? But, why—)

Then, the girl finally realized.

She surely had a recollection of the boy's face.

"N...No way...why..."

She should have seen him before. After all, this boy—

"...?"

Seeing the girl's expression stiffen, the boy paused in his steps, puzzled.

And then, as if he realized something, his eyes widened.

"Gua... Damn it! Ahhh!"

He covered his face with both hands and shouted.

Facing a boy like that, the girl pointed out her index finger.

"**Why is Ren Ashbell-sama a boy**?"

"Gu..."

The girl stared at the boy, who was trying to catch his breath, with a stern look.

She understood that she was saying something unthinkable.

After all, the boy in front of her had short hair and his chest was completely flat.

No matter how anyone looked at him, he was a boy.

(But I am not mistaken—)

The boy's face was similar to the Blade Dancer's, who was currently winning throughout the tournament because of her overwhelming strength.

Without a doubt, it was the face of that person— Ren Ashbell!

(Besides, that sword—)

The jet-black demon sword that was grasped in the boy's hand. That darkness-attribute elemental waffe— « the sword that pierces truth» and her companion, which, in the past, had brought down many of her opponents.

Vorpal Sword

And then, above all else, there was that sword skill, which was displayed when he, with merely one blow, brought down the raging spirit.

"Ah, this is, err, how do I put it ..."

The boy was attempting to deceive her frantically and hastily.

"Wh...What to do, Restia!"

"I don't care. Even if you're not in the middle of a match, I had always been warning you to be in female clothing."

"But I didn't think that there would be people in the middle of such a forest!"

"Nevertheless, since it was a cute girl, you went to save her without thinking."

"I...It's not like that!"

The boy was, for some reason, sneakily talking with the jet-black demon sword that was held in his hand.

The girl's head was in a complete chaos. She was also surprised that the true identity of Ren Ashbell was a boy because, to begin with, it was hard for her to believe in the existence of a male elementalist.

Those who could contract a spirit were only pure maidens— that was the common sense taught to her from the «Divine Ritual Institute» from when she was

young. Speaking of a male elementalist, there was nothing that came to mind, but that legendary Demon King, Solomon.

(This tournament's favorite, the famous Ren Ashbell-sama, is actually a boy—)

If that became known, the scandal would be so big, that it would affect the Blade Dance greatly.

Scratching his hair as if giving up, the boy gazed at the girl in resignation.

"Er...err, erm, there are circumstances to this. So, I am a boy but, without asking anything, could you keep this a secret from everyone?"

Receiving his troubled and pleading look, the girl felt her chest throbbing spontaneously.

(Eerr, what do I do...)

Honestly, the girl was bewildered. The blade dancer, whom she admired, was a boy— even if she suddenly said such a thing, there was no way that anyone could comprehend it immediately.

Besides, though her throne inheritance rights had been erased, she was still the second princess of the Ordesia Empire and a pure princess maiden of the «Divine Ritual Institute». Was it alright for her to overlook this fact which would desecrate the «Blade Dance»?

"..."

However, when she saw that boy's troubled face—

"...I understand."

Unintentionally, she nodded.

"I won't tell anyone, I won't ask anything. You are the one who saved my life."

Even if her true identity was a boy, Ren Ashbell was still her admired blade dancer.

Her Blade Dance gave the girl, who was always depressed since **that day**, the courage. That understanding would not change. Besides, there was also the fact, that he had saved her life.

To give a reward to a Knight's meritorious service was the imperial family's precept.

"T...Thank you! You saved me some trouble!"

The boy took a breath of relief.

"You're quite a simple person. It's just a verbal promise."

"Yeah, but you don't look like a girl who would break a promise."

"..."

Facing such straightforward words, the girl's cheeks were dyed slightly red.

(Wh...Why is my chest beating so fast...)

"I'll escort you to the forest's exit, since Astral Zero's forests are dangerous."

"Th...Thank you..."

"Your shoes... they seemed to have slipped off. Come on, hold on to my back."

The boy noticed that the girl's feet were covered in injuries and helped her climb up his back.

"Er...Erm, my breasts are touching your back."

Embarrassed, the girl whispered at the side of his ear.

"Yeah?"

"N...Nothing..."

With her cheeks dyed red, the girl quickly turned her face away.

In the middle of a dim forest, while listening to the sounds of them stepping on the fallen leaves, the girl inquired.

"Hey, why did you go so far as to fake being a girl and participate in the «Blade Dance»?"

"..."

After a moment of silence—

"Because, I have a «Wish» I want to be granted."

The boy answered that with a serious expression.

A «Wish»— A miracle of the Elemental Lords that was bestowed upon the victor of the blade dance.

At that moment, those words that the boy spoke of brought about an insight in the girl's mind.

(I see, if it's for the Blade Dance «Wish», even my power...)

After coming to a place near the match area, the girl was gently let off from his back.

"After this, you'll have to return by yourself. Because I will be having my next match."

"Yeah, Thank you. Err..."

"Uh huh?"

"Tell me your name."

"My name?"

"Ren Ashbell is an alias, right? That's not it, your real name."

"..."

After he hesitated for a while—

"It's Kamito. Kazehaya Kamito."

"Kazehaya Kamito."

It had a strange and mysterious sound. The girl muttered that name as her tongue rolled.

"Well, err... could we meet again? Kamito."

"Eh? Ye...Yeah, once the Blade Dance finishes—"

"—Is that so. It's a promise, Kamito."

—After that, in seven days, Ren Ashbell held the title of the Strongest Blade Dancer.

However, the girl never met him again.

Because he, who should have been granted his «Wish», suddenly disappeared.

Chapter 1: Team Battle

Part 1

"U...h..."

Areishia Spirit Academy, Raven Class dormitory.

In a room, illuminated by the morning sun, Kazehaya Kamito woke up.

(Hn, If I remember correctly, there will be a team battle in the morning.)

Usually, he would enjoy a bit more time dozing off, however, today he could not do so.

He had enough of being late and getting lectured by the teacher, Freya.

Planning to fold the sheets and get up, he reached out both hands, only to—

Funyuu.

Feel them touch something soft.

(What is this? It's small, tender... a little cold, but feels good.)

Funyuu. *Funyuu*.

Half awake, he played with the mysterious soft thing within the palms of his hands, when-

"You finally woke up, Kamito."

"..."

A voice made him freeze.

A beautiful, nude girl was sitting on his chest.

Her silver hair glittered in the morning sun. Her tight bare skin was white like milk.

She was small, but had all the necessary curves. The girl's figure was ideal.

She looked at Kamito with her mysterious violet eyes, her face expressionless.

"What's the matter? You're not going to play with my breasts anymore?"

"... Owaaaaa!"

Kamito straightened flustered and pointed at the beautiful girl before him,

"Wh...Wh...What are you doing!? Or rather why are you nude?!"

"I'm not nude, I'm properly wearing knee socks."

Straddling Kamito's abdomen she raised her knees to show him.

Startled by that, mysteriously erotic, action, Kamito looked away flustered.

"No, that's worse! Because compared to nude, knee socks nude is even, err, ...that!"

"Do you want me to take off my knee socks? Kamito... pervert."

While staying expressionless the beautiful silver haired girl bashfully rubbed her knees.

He did not understand why she reacted like that but, somehow, for this spirit, showing her bare feet seemed more embarrassing.

Yes. This snow fairy like beautiful girl was not human.

She was the Sword Spirit Est.

'She was an extremely powerful 'Sealed Spirit' that made a spirit contract with Kamito a few days ago.

But in her current condition, she could not exhibit even around a tenth of her original strength.

Within his sub consciousness, Kamito was rejecting the spirit contract with her and as a result, she became unable to return to Astral Zero where her real form was.

"A...Anyway, move aside Est!"

"Roger, Kamito."

Although Est seemed a little dissatisfied, she obediently moved.

She was squirming on the sheet. ...The sensation of her soft thighs was bad for his heart.

While scratching his bed hair in relief, Kamito finally got up and at that moment...

Chuu.

"...!?"

It was a perfect surprise attack.

Despite that noticing that he was kissed, it lasted several seconds.

The sensation of her soft lips gently separating turned his cheeks red hot.

"You... Wh...What are you doing all of a sudden?!"

"A wake up kiss, Kamito."

Est answered expressionlessly.

"Why do such—"

"Because it's unfair you only kissed Claire. Is it that you don't want to do it with me?"

Hearing Est's blaming tone, Kamito softened his voice.

"You s...saw, didn't you? ...That."

"Yes. Because, at that moment, I was also there."

"...Ah, come to think of it, that is right."

Kamito immediately recalled that moment and sighed heavily.

A week ago, that time when he fought the frenzied militarized spirit in Academy Town.

Est was certainly there— in the form of a sword of his elemental waffe.

It seemed that the moment, when Claire kissed the exhausted, due to the loss of energy, boy to wake him up, was being observed.

It was certain that it awakened him in one shot, however... now that he thought about it, it was also extremely embarrassing.

"I heard that a kiss is an official ritual of a spirit contract. In that case, Est too."

Est gently brushed her silver hair hanging by her cheeks.

She closed her eyes, pouted slightly pitifully her cherry-blossom colored lips and slowly brought her face near him.

"So, why did it turn out like this?"

"It's only natural and it’s within my rights. After all, I'm Kamito's contracted spirit."

"...!"

Although she was an extremely strong Sealed Spirit, whose power, was at the moment concealed, Est's current appearance was that of an ordinary cute girl.

After being approached like this, Kamito thought that it couldn't be helped that his heart was beating faster.

"He...Hey, Est..."

"Please close your eyes, master."

Est brought her face closer in one motion. Their noses were almost touching now and he could smell her sweat scent and feel the tickle of her breath.

Just before her rose bud like lips were about to touch his...

"Kamito, there's a team battle this morning, so be sure to make breakfast more luxurious than—"

"...!"

Bam! The bathroom door was slammed opened and there—

"Wh...Wh...Wh...Wh..."

A beautiful red-haired girl stood. Her ruby-colored eyes were wide open as she took in the scene before her.

The girl's body was wrapped in a bath towel which hugged her gentle curves tightly.

There was white steam rising from her, slightly cherry blossom colored after being washed, skin.

Her breasts were definitely of a child's size, but these small mounds were also plenty charming.

From the tips of her soaking wet red hair, drops of water were falling onto the floor.

On the bed, before her was nude… no, knee sock nude Est.

That is when time froze.

"Claire... Y...You're mistaken, this is...!"

It was that moment when the flustered boy stood up and tried to explain.

Gogogogogogo...!

"Wh...What are you doing, you perverted sex maniac ——!"

"Guoo!"

A leather whip, used for training animals, came flying all of a sudden and landed a clean hit on his chin.

Kamito wrapped the bed sheets around his body as he fell to the floor.

"I...I've misjudged you, you licentious brute, beast!"

While holding onto the bath towel with one hand, the girl approached briskly the boy, squirming on the floor, and forcefully trampled on his head with the heel of her bare foot.

Claire Rouge.

She was his classmate and, by some twist of fate, Kamito was tied to her by a master-servant contract.

At least she had a ridiculously cute face and was a beautiful girl. She had however… an extremely brutal personality.

"Wh...What-What were you doing? Hey, just now, what were you doing with that Sword Spirit?"

Pishii, pishii, pishiii!

"Hey, wait, stop ... guoo!"

It was a tempest of whips that relentlessly swung downwards. Her bristled red hair was just like blazing flames.

And during this constant onslaught of devastating whip blows…

Kamito noticed something. He had wound up noticing something.

"Wa...Wait...Claire, isn't that bad?"

And then, as he had wound up noticing it, he had to voice it out. For her own sake.

By the way, when it was about things like this, Kamito turned into a strangely honest and blunt person.

"...? What?"

Her clear ruby colored pupils sternly looked down on Kamito.

"Erm, this angle ... is err, very revealing."

"Eh?"

Claire blinked as she had her foot on Kamito's head.

That is when she finally realized it.

Kamito lay on the floor, with her foot on his head, and through the opening of her towel he could see her exposed tight.

"...!"

Claire's whole body felt hot from embarrassment.

She fixed her bath towel in a fluster and her shoulders slightly trembled.

"Y...Y...You, you!"

Gogogogogogogogogo...!

"Wa...Wait, this is a misunderstanding, relax! Err…**I didn't see all the way inside**!"

It seemed like Kamito's frantic excuse—

"..."

Backfired.

"...Oh, I understand."

Claire informed him with a shuddering voice.

"After this, I'll give you two choices. You better answer honestly."

Kamito swallowed nervously and nodded continuously.

Here, he should choose his answer carefully. Depending on his reply, it was not unlikely that he would become cinders.

"About your cooking preferences, would you prefer medium? Or well-done?"

...Things like choices did not exist from the beginning.

"I...If possible, rare is good but..."

Just as Kamito gave his answer.

"Scarlet!"

From an empty space, a hell cat, clad in crimson flames , appeared.

"Roast huh, it's decided then."

It was after those words, said with a smile that promised nothing but painful death and a fascinated expression on her face that—

Spontaneously, a flashy explosion resounded in Raven Class dormitory.

Part 2

Areishia Spirit Academy.

Princess maidens from all over the empire gathered at this training school and learned how to become proper elementalists.

Its vast territory included the «Spirit Forest» and the Academy Town. The academy also had residential teachers who possessed strength equal to that of the imperial capital's spirit knights. It was just like an independent small country.

At the same time the morning mist cleared up and the bell of lectures commencing sounded, there was a particular one-horse carriage visiting the academy.

Its coachman, an old butler in a suit, got down from the horse in front of the gate and opened the door of the carriage in a respectful manner.

"We have arrived, Fianna-sama."

"Thank you for your efforts, old man."

Coming out of the carriage was a beautiful girl about fifteen, sixteen years old.

Her glossy black hair fluttered in the gentle breeze. Her cold looking eyes emitted a strong will. Her clear white skin could be compared to the virgin snow of the area of Laurenfrost and her uniform designed as a black dress was gorgeous.

The girl, called Fianna, alighted from the carriage and looked up at the building of the Academy. The sight of the school dazzled her.

"This is Areishia Spirit Academy. The place where elementalists from all over the empire gather."

"Please be very careful, Fianna-sama. It’s impossible to fool the eyes of that Dusk Witch with poor tricks."

"I understand."

With a nod, the girl gently grasped a spirit crystal, concealed by the sleeve of her uniform.

In the empire's currency, it was a good-for-nothing article of 20 million rood.

"Rubia Elstein's sister seems to be in this academy."

"Princess, that name is a taboo. You better not say it here."

"That’s right."

The Calamity Queen, who once brought about an unprecedented great disaster to the empire.

As a taboo, that person's true name was even prohibited from being spoken.

It was said that just by muttering that name a pure girl's sacred nature would be tainted.

She considered it to be a ridiculous superstition. Nevertheless, the people, who saw her up close in the past, felt that there was a slice of accuracy in those words . They believed in the jinx.

(...That's right. The truth is, the fear of her has yet to affect me.)

The girl cleared her throat, then she lowered her voice and whispered.

"Besides, I am also concerned about the elementalist called Kazehaya Kamito."

"Hmm, is it that male elementalist? There was a talk, that a few days ago he defeated a frenzied militarized spirit in Academy Town."

"Yes, based on all the eye-witnesses' words, it seemed to be a splendid blade dance of close resemblance to that of the strongest blade dancer — Ren Ashbell."

Fianna's voice became lively as she got a little excited.

The old butler gave her a stern look for that.

"Princess, don't tell me, you fell in love with that boy"

"Fe...fell in love...!?"

Fianna's voice trembled from embarrassment. Her cheeks turned red.

"Th...that can't be it, right? After all, I have never met him before... it's just that I have an interest in what kind of person this male elementalist is."

It was a lie.

The male elementalist, who defeated the frenzied militarized spirit in Academy Town.

The moment Fianna heard that boy's name, she immediately realized.

It was him.

Three years ago, that boy, who had saved her in the forest of Astral Zero.

Despite promising to meet again, it was unknown why he disappeared after the Blade Dance.

(—However, I finally found him.)

When she heard the report on that day, Fianna decided to enter the Areishia Spirit Academy.

If that boy announced his candidacy to the Blade Dance again—

For her that was a once in lifetime opportunity.

"Kamito, I'll forgive you for breaking our promise."

Fianna glared at the school building of the academy and an impish smile surfaced.

"However, I'm not letting you escape again♪"

Part 3

About eight minutes have passed since the start of the match.

In a deep forest, which was enshrouded in a light purple mist, two shadows were moving fast.

"Claire, watch the thicket on the left. There's an ambush."

"How do you know?"

"Intuition, if it was me, I would ambush from over there—"

At that moment, just as Kamito suspected, bluish-white lightning bullets were fired from the left thicket.

"Tch—"

Kamito kicked the ground and accelerated. He jumped in front of Claire and deflected the lightning bullets shot at the speed of sound with his sword.

It was not a feat that could be achieved with just an ordinary blade. Endowed with spirit magic resistance ability, the elemental waffe of sword spirit Est— « Terminus Est», made all the magic attacks ineffective.

"Claire!"

Before Kamito shouted, Claire was already on her target. The wind played with her red hair and below her fluttering skirt, a leather whip holder could be seen.

While she placed her foot on a tree branch and dodged the rain of fired lightning bullets, she released her elemental waffe— «Flame Tongue».

There was a sharp swinging, cutting sound. The Flame Tongue, which could cut up everything, easily sliced through rows of standing trees.

From the middle of the grove of trees that became almost bare in a moment, a thunder elementalist girl appeared.

She had her eyes hidden under her forelocks which made her look a little gloomy.

There was a cluster of bluish-white lightning bullets floating beside her.

It was not a high ranking spirit like Est or Scarlet. It was a low ranking spirit that could only keep an indeterminate form, however, it was plenty helpful as a battery to use spirit magic.

It seemed that that girl's role was a disturbance by means of support fire.

"Humph, a sniper who shows herself is the same as a turtle coming up on land."

Claire thrust her whip in a declaration of victory. With the thunder spirit right behind her, the girl sniper ran towards the middle of the forest in a worried manner—

"You're not getting away! Scarlet, chase her!"

At the same time Claire shouted, the elemental waffe Flame Tongue transformed into the form of a hellcat, clad in flames.

Because of being possessed by the frenzy spirit, Scarlet was once the size of a kitten, however, now it had recovered fully. Its form was of a lovely cat, but its strength was certainly of a roaring fierce lion.

The surging crimson flames attacked the thunder elementalist girl.

However, that scorching heat, which by right should melt even rocks, did not even burn a single place of the girl's body.

That was because the battle field was situated in Astral Zero, which the academy used for practice matches.

It was another world and spirits lived there.

In the real world, spirits had to change into an embodiment of physical strength, but here they could be used as an embodiment of pure divine power.

In other words, it almost completely reduced the physical damage to the body.

Nonetheless, it did not mean that shocks, pain and so forth disappeared, a consequence was that an equal damage would be delivered to the mind instead; for

example, if one was torn up by Scarlet's claws, he would certainly faint and become unable to battle.

While carbonizing many trees of the forest, Scarlet was chasing closely behind the girl. However, the elementalist seemed to be considerably more accustomed to the terrain and prepared for battle and while distracting it with spirit magic, she was quickly making her escape deep into the forest.

"Erghh, stay still!"

Losing her temper, Claire jumped down to the ground from the gap between the trees.

"Since it came to this, I'll blow everything together with my strongest spirit magic."

"Wait, Claire, the ground looks weird—"

Kamito shouted, and at that moment, a large quantity of earth and sand exploded from under Claire's feet.

"Wh...!?"

Appearing from underground were gigantic crustacean pincers.

"Negligence is one's greatest enemy, Claire Rouge of Raven Class!"

From inside the sand that was raising up and the large hole that opened in the ground, the carapace armor of countless protuberances flew out.

It was a type of elemental waffe that covered the whole body in armor.

Claire was blown off by that blast and has fallen to the ground. The spirit attacked using earth and sand and the impact left the body substantially damaged.

"Claire!"

Before Kamito came running to her, the carapace elementalist was already in pursuit. This was not a coincidental attack. They were scrupulously aiming for the moment when Claire went down onto the ground.

"Eat this, the elemental waffe of the carapace spirit « Kuraste»— «Breaker Arm»."

"—Guu! Flames, dance in my hand, dance!"

The fallen Claire released countless fireballs from her hand.

However, the armor type elemental waffe plunged right through the barrage of flames.

"Ha, the flame attribute isn't effective against the carapace spirit. Didn't you learn that during the lecture?"

Gaa— A shoulder-tackle by the carapace armor blew Claire away.

Kamito kicked the ground and quickly turned around. Holding Est in a reverse grip, he stopped Claire's body that came flying at him, embracing the girl tightly.

"U...gh..."

Claire let out in a languid voice from his arms.

It seemed that the recent attack had greatly drained her divine power; however, she still looked to be conscious.

(Just before the crash, she released the fireballs at the ground and destroyed her opponent's stance. As expected of her.)

"Hey, are you alright?"

"Y...yea... Eh... y...you, what are you doing!"

Suddenly, Claire's face turned red.

Claire's petite body was being held in such a manner that her back and knees were supported by both his hands.

It was what was called being carried like a princess.

"Fua... Id...idiot... qu...quickly put me down!"

"He..hey, don't struggle! You'll fall!"

"Shut up! Shut up! Quickly put me down——!"

Boka. Boka. Boka. Boka.

Claire started striking Kamito's chest while being carried like a princess. This somehow made her look like a small, cute animal.

"Are you worried about me? You don't have to, you know. You're pretty light."

"Is th...that... because my chest is flat?"

"No, I didn’t say such a thing. I just thought that you're cute like a small animal."

"...! Cu...cute..."

She looked downwards with a red face and Kamito let her down with a relieved sigh.

The carapace elementalist had already disappeared. It seemed that, because Claire was defeated in the recent attack, she was waiting for another chance for a surprise assault. As opposed to her outward appearance, she was the cautious type.

From deep within the forest, Scarlet, who was supposed to be chasing the thunder elementalist, returned.

They did not seem to have suffered any injuries, but it looked like they let their prey escape.

"That thunder elementalist purposely showed herself to us."

"Yea, when I got down onto the ground while chasing her, that carapace armor stopped me with a surprise attack. We have suffered thoroughly from their good teamwork."

Annoyed, Claire lashed at the ground with her whip.

"As expected of a team of the cunning Wolverine Class ."

"It's not that they're particularly cunning or anything, considering their fellow spirits' compatibility, it was an obvious strategy."

Kamito said with a shrug and Claire sullenly shut her mouth.

"However, it's strange that they aren't coming to chase us. I know that they're being cautious but— still."

"That's right. From the beginning, that thunder elementalist's movement could only be seen as stalling for time."

Astral Zero's forest was quieting down.

He couldn't feel their presence at all, not from the surrounding thickets, nor from the underground.

(With this time stalling, do they have some sort of plan ?)

"I want to send out a scout to search for the enemy, but ..."

"If that was possible, I'd have already done it."

At any rate, there were three people remaining in the opposing team. They on the other hand had just two. Depending on the situation, it could be that one person had to fight either two or three people. In a one-on-one battle, both Kamito and Claire would not be defeated. However, if they were caught and taken on by more than two coordinated fighters, winning would be substantially more difficult.

Also, even in the case of a one-on-one battle, the fellow spirits' strength and weakness had to be considered. In an actual battle one should also remember the matter of compatibility when the attributes of a spirit were more effective than an elementalist's ability.

"—Seems like you're having a tough battle, Kazehaya Kamito."

Suddenly, from behind, a voice sounded.

Kamito turned around and saw how a black figure quickly appeared from inside of the shadow on the ground.

The black figure very quickly took on the form of an adult woman.

She had glossy long black hair and the glasses she was wearing gave her a very intellectual appearance.

She had on cuff-long white robe on top of her suit, that beautiful lady was—

"Teacher Freya?"

Raven Class's homeroom teacher and this match's inspector, Freya Grandol.

Thanks to her contracted spirit's ability, she was able to travel through shadows—

"Is that alright? To appear in the middle of the match."

"What, there's no problem with giving poor-scoring students advice."

Freya suddenly smiled and pushed up her glasses.

"Although, the team you're currently facing is of a superior ranking, so you'll obviously have a tough battle. Based on individual strength, you two are nigh on unreachable, but your team strength is lacking. ...By the way, why were you injured before the match?"

"This morning, I was roasted."

He glared at Claire beside him with scorn; in response she quickly averted her eyes.

"In the first place, though, I think it is strange to have a five-to-two match ."

Despite the fact they only had two people; the team they were facing had five people. They had already defeated two, but the sniper thunder elementalist, the hand-to-hand-fighting type carapace elementalist and then the last person, who had yet to show herself, were remaining.

"Did you know? The fact that your team only has two people is bad. You can't qualify for entry in this round's « Blade Dance» without a five-member team. What do you plan to do?"

"We'll find people before the deadline. We don't really need to have all five members to be high level elementalists. After all, my plan is for I, alone, and— this slave spirit to win through this."

Claire muttered unintelligibly and Freya glared at her with a serious face.

"You had better not take group battles lightly, Claire Rouge. You are certainly a strong elementalist, but even so you absolutely can't beat a coordinated team."

After that, she turned towards Kamito,

"Do you know chess?"

"Greyworth forcefully made me her playing partner. However, I had never won."

"The queen is certainly a strong piece. In a one-on-one battle, there are hardly times when it will lose. However, depending on the situation, it is also possible for it to be taken down by a pawn, which is the weakest piece on the desk."

"I know about that."

"But you do not understand it. Your fighting method feels...awfully isolated."

Without responding, Kamito shut his mouth.

The boy, who was once called— the strongest blade dancer. He, who was raised as an assassin at that mad « Instructional School» had never experienced fighting alongside his comrades.

Creeping to the target's back and cutting its throat— that was his original fighting method.

On a whim of the Elemental Lords, the Blade Dance's regulation was changed every time it was held.

The Blade Dance, fifteen years ago, was a battle royale.

The one three years ago, was an individual elimination match.

This time however it was a team competition.

Honestly, he didn't think that his teamwork with Claire was turning out well.

And the three-year long blank period was for him, as an elementalist, a fatal flaw.

He also had a contracted spirit, who could not exhibit even a tenth of her strength yet.

There were many factors that had to be overcome.

"Claire Rouge, you too. You do not understand what it means to fight in a team."

"I'm always alone. T...this guy is just a slave spirit..."

"Oh dear, you two have many difficulties in store for you."

Teacher Freya sighed and disappeared into the shadow again.

"...Hmm, because of that just now, two minutes have been used up. There are about five minutes remaining."

As it was, if they did not reach a conclusion soon, both team's inter-school rank would drop.

It will affect this two, who were still of low rank, greatly.

—Then, the hell cat, snuggling at the side of Claire's feet, let out a roar.

"Hey, Scarlet is saying something."

"Yeah, the forest looks strange. The wild animals are stirring up.

Claire was frowning with a serious face for some reason—

"There—"

She suddenly faced the forest and fired a fire attribute spirit magic.

It was a fireball— a high ranking spirit magic that would reduce a target to ashes with ultra-hot flames.

The red hot flames licked the ground and the forest near it was reduced to ashes.

With the rising black smoke, a boorish figure appeared standing in a relaxed manner.

"Well, what a frightening ojou-sama."

The girl wore the carapace armor of her elemental waffe over her body.

Despite receiving a direct hit of the fireball, she did not have a single burn mark.

"This is unexpected... you came out for a fairly fight. Have you already given up on a surprise attack?"

"Our roles have ended. The leader's preparations have been completed."

"Preparations?"

Claire and Kamito frowned simultaneously.

From the direction the black smoke was rising up—

"Huh....?" "What... is that!?"

A gigantic timber-scaffolding was put together.

While its structure was simple, it was without a doubt a splendid shrine.

And top of it a small girl, wearing the academy uniform, was dancing. It looked like she was carrying some kind of a ritual.

The girl had beautiful platinum-blonde hair held by a wooden cane.

"Our brethren, now is the time, hand down the iron hammer to the forest devastators!"

From the top of the gigantic scaffolding, she faced their side and thrust the cane with a snap.

"Wh...what's going on, that girl ... when did she manage to make a shrine that big!?"

"We were preparing it from the last night to have it ready for today's match."

The carapace elementalist girl proudly held up her pincers.

...Indeed, if it was with that spirit's power, it should be possible to make the shrine in a night.

"I...it's unfair, that thing! A ritual Kagura!"

"Uh-huh, it isn't unfair! Without a large-scale ritual, I can't call out my contracted spirit!"

The girl, who was on top of the scaffolding and holding a cane, shouted.

"Shut up, children should stay silent!"

"Unh, what do you mean by children, isn't your chest small too?"

"What... did you say?"

Pakii! The sound of a twig being stepped on and broken resounded. Claire's red hair was bristling up like a blazing flame.

"The family of Druid ..."

Kamito muttered wiping the sweat from his forehead.

They were nobles from the Ordesia Empire. It was a family of ancient honorable elementalists, which had lived in the spirit forest since before the foundation of the empire and succeeded the blood relationship of the princess maidens with their original methods.

"That girl's spirit is a little special, summoning takes time."

"I see, so that was the reason you were stalling..."

The ground was violently shaking. The flames of the torches, lighting the area surrounding the shrine, were thunderously burning up.

...He felt tremendous pressure. What that girl was trying to use was an outrageously powerful spirit. It was likely that it roughly matched the giant military spirit they fought the other day.

"—I won't let you. Scarlet!"

Claire released Scarlet as its elemental waffe, Flame Tongue, and hit the ground very hard.

"Kamito, I'll hold her back. You go destroy that shrine. "

"Got it!"

Kamito nodded and ran with the silver-glittering « Terminus Est» in his hand.

As an elementalist, Claire was a genius.

Although the compatibility of hers and carapace spirit worked against her, in a one-on-one battle, she would not lose.

There was a considerable distance till the shrine, but with Kamito's speed, he should make it in time.

"...!?"

Suddenly the ground in front of him burst open.

From within the thicket, spirit magic lightning bullets were fired.

It was the thunder spirit girl. Naturally, Kamito had also predicted that an ambush was hidden in the forest.

However—

"Toryaaaaaa!"

"Wha...!?"

This was unexpected. —The elementalist herself came interfering.

It was impossible to ignore. Kamito stopped and turned around.

(I'll stun her in one strike—)

He nimbly evaded her attack and aimed the handle of the sword at her stomach—

At that moment, an intense flash blinded him.

The thunder spirit, the girl was using, blew itself up in front of him.

The rain of the intense lightning attack assaulted Kamito. Sharp pain and then numbness ran throughout his whole body.

It wasn’t strong enough to incapacitate him. However, he was, for a while, stunned.

Before his eyes recovered, the girl, also caught in the explosion, fainted and had therefore been defeated.

(That girl aimed for a tie from the start...)

It was a strategy unsuited for individual battles, but when working in a team, it was a good way to achieve victory.

Her duty was to stop him for a while. And in that she had succeeded.

"We're done for..."

"Come, tyrant governor! Thou, beast king of the destruction army that grinds and smashes everything!"

On top of the shrine, the forest girl aimed the cane to the sky and recited the majestic summoning.

The ritual has been completed.

"...Its name is beast swarm spirit «Cernunnos»!"

From everywhere in the forest, a countless number of roars could be heard.

That Druid girl was calling the beasts that were living in Astral Zero.

"The beast swarm spirit... a spirit of vast possession range type!"

It was the same as the frenzy spirit that drove Claire's Scarlet, the militarized spirit and many others mad, a type that could possess targets from a longer distance.

Dododododododododododoo!

The group of beasts, which were controlled by the swarm spirit, made the earth tremble when they came charging.

"Be...Because they aren't spirits, if they were trampled, they would die. Normally."

"I...If it's the handling of animals, I too will not lose!"

Pishi! *Pishi!* Claire, who defeated the carapace elementalist, swang her whip.

"Give it up, Claire, it's our loss."

"—The match is over."

Teacher Freya, who appeared quickly like a shadow, blew into the whistle announcing the end of the match.

Chapter 2: The Young Ladies' Afternoon

Part 1

"Mugugug..."

Claire Rouge was stuffing a cream bun down her throat.

It was a sight unusual for her, who took it as a creed—that nobles are always elegant.

"Don't binge, you'll get fat you know."

Kamito glared with his eyes half-opened and Claire struck the table in frustration.

"But, but, urggggh!"

"Claire. That's my jam bun."

Est protested calmly.

They were at a salon café inside the academy.

From the opened terrace, soft daylight was shining in.

The three of them were sitting at a round table near a window and having a slightly late lunch.

Inside the bamboo basket, placed right in the middle of that table, was a pile of jam, melon, sausage and many other different kinds of buns.

Any student could use the café and on top of that the freshly baked buns were free. Coffee and black tea also had free refills.

There was also an eatery in the academy, but because it charged a fee equal to a high-class restaurant in the imperial capital, neither Kamito, who was not even a noble, nor Claire, who had her fortune and territory confiscated, could afford it.

"Our team ranking dropped again."

Claire laid, prostrated, on the table and groaned.

"It can't be helped. We were matched up with a superior team. "

"That may be true... but strength-wise, we are definitively better than them."

Claire gnawed her lip. Although they were at a disadvantage in numbers, she seemed to be unable to come to terms with losing to lower rank opponents.

It was certain that as elementalists they were superior.

The reason they lost was their inability to execute proper coordination with each other. Claire overestimated her strength and chased her enemies too far in, and Kamito too could not rely on her in a dire situation.

It was not possible to win with just the queen piece—in other words, their situation was something like that.

"Despite that it's not the time to be stumbling about now..."

There was a reason Claire was impatient to the point like she was binge eating the buns.

The regulations of the Blade Dance held in two months were different from the individual battles three years ago , if they didn’t put together a five-member team, they

wouldn't be able to take part in it. In addition, only the top three teams decided by the inter-school competition could participate from Areishia Spirit Academy.

Kamito, who started attending the school just a while ago, had no achievements that could raise his ranking.

To raise it, one had to win a formal practice match like the one from this morning or complete a task assigned by the academy; however, he had done neither.

Defeating the giant spirit the other day, dueling with Sylphid Knights captain Ellis Fahrengart or even battling the frenzied demon spirit, those were all informal battles and did not reflect on the rankings.

On the other hand, Claire, who should have towered above the rest and been superior as an elementalist—

Had shockingly the lowest results in the class.

There could be only one reason for that. *It was because she was doing every mission alone*.

She failed when she attempted the missions that should be originally completed by a team and she was defeated when she challenged upper classmen alone in a

championship match. As long as she did such a thing, no matter how strong she was, there was no way her ranking could raise.

There was a reason Claire was isolated from the rest of the academy.

Rubia Elstein.

Four years ago, while she had the position of Queen serving the fire Elemental Lord, she betrayed him, disappeared, and brought about an unprecedented great disaster to the empire. Because of that others started calling her The Calamity Queen.

As her younger sister, Claire was looked at with contempt and fear by the majority of the academy students.

Claire's reason for participating in the Blade Dance was to restore the Elstein family name and —above all else— to find out the truth regarding her elder sister Rubia Elstein.

—It's not the time to be stumbling about now.

Blood-oozing emotions filled Claire's rough words.

"For now, we should also find comrades quickly. I understood it during this morning's match. If we stay as we are now, we not only won't be able to win the Blade Dance, but wouldn't even get into the top three ranks, which is required for the participation."

The boy, called the strongest blade dancer three years ago, accepted his greatest weakness honestly.

At first, he just came to the academy due to Greyworth's request, but now he clearly had a reason to regain his strength from three years ago.

Darkness Spirit Restia—his former contracted spirit.

That reason was to take her back with his own hands.

The girl who, for the first time, brought light to Kamito's life, which was shrouded in darkness before.

And also the girl who gave a heartbroken Claire the frenzy spirit and tried to drive the giant spirit mad in the middle of the town.

He met her again, but she was vastly different from the one Kamito once knew.

—What on earth happened to her?

So, for the sake of knowing that, he absolutely had to meet the participation requirements for the Blade Dance.

"Kamito, what's wrong? You're making such a serious face."

"Did you forget to put sugar into your coffee?"

Claire and Est peered at his face with a worried look.

"No, sorry, it's just..."

"By any chance, is it about your former contracted spirit?"

She was surprisingly sharp at times like this.

Kamito quickly averted his eyes from the ruby pupils that peered in his own.

"...Well… Fine. But tell me everything when you feel like it."

Claire did not try to pry deeper. Despite her arrogance, there were, occasionally, times when she showed consideration.

"...Ah, I understand."

Kamito nodded when-.

"Ah, everyone, having lunch?"

A cool but elegant voice was heard.

The boy turned around. And there—

A magnificent, platinum-blonde haired and beautiful girl was standing.

Her very appearance was of a noble ojou-sama.

Her milky white skin was smooth like silk and her emerald eyes locked a faint glow in them.

The way she brushed her hair aside with one hand at her side looked strangely good.

Rinslet Laurenfrost.

She attended the Raven Class, just as Kamito and was Claire's self-proclaimed rival.

Due to her rivalry with Claire, she was trying to make Kamito her manservant. She was a troubling ojou-sama.

Right beside her was—

"Fufu, what a delicious smell."

A girl dressed in a maid uniform. She had a gentle smile on her lips as she stood there.

She was wearing a long skirt with a lot of neat frills attached. Her hair was cut into short bobs and she had a lovely white brim on her head.

She was Rinslet's personal maid, Carol.

Kamito didn't know why there was a maid in the academy, but she was the only one he saw here. So, it would certainly have been an exception made for the Laurenfrost family.

"...Why did you come here, Rinslet?"

Claire swallowed her bun and sternly glared at the blond.

"I just happened to pass by. What a very simple lunch you have, just buns."

Rinslet swiped her hair over her shoulder and looked down on the three of them calmly.

"Milady is saying that she wants to eat together with everyone."

"Wh... Carol, what are you talking about!"

Poka! *Poka!* Rinslet's face turned bright red as she started hitting Carol's shoulders.

As expected of her exclusive maid, it was a magnificent interpretation.

"Sit down both of you. You came all the way here after all, so let's eat together."

Kamito suggested only to have Claire step on his foot hard.

"Ouch, what are you doing?!"

"Nothing? I just thought you lack loyalty...Idiot."

"I...it's n...not like I particularly want to eat together with you all!"

"Milady is saying it'll be nice to sit next to Kamito."

"Carol!"

Carol soothed the embarrassed girl and got her to settle down.

Rinslet, sat next to Kamito and averted her eyes as she asked.

"...H...How are your injuries?"

"Ah, they've mostly healed. All thanks to the healing spirit."

It was about the injury he got from the time he fought the giant spirit. Probably because he overdid it, it'll take a little longer to heal than he thought, but as expected, the academy spirit's medical care was excellent.

"Fufu, Milady has been constantly worrying about Kamito-sama."

"Carol, d...don't say anything unnecessary!"

Rinslet snapped with a grinding noise.

"However, it is also natural that Milady would be worried. After all, Kamito-sama is under one roof with Milady Claire, so it wouldn't be odd if something were to happen.

"Wha...What are you saying, you stupid maid! There's no way such things would happen."

This time it was Claire who snapped.

"...What kind of worry is that?"

Est was munching on a melon bun and beside her Kamito just sighed wearily at their antics.

This was how Rinslet and Carol ended up having lunch together.

Even Claire, who appeared upset at the beginning, eventually started talking about this morning's match.

Then about which stores cake was more delicious, how boring the introduction lection about the foundation of spirit learning was, and just like that, normal girl-like conversations were beginning to bloom.

Somehow these two were on pretty good terms. It was especially surprising for Claire, who was isolated from the rest of her peers at the academy. It could be said that Rinslet was her only friend.

"That reminds me; it seems that a newly admitted student is joining the Raven Class."

"Our class? Despite the fact that Kamito just came in recently?"

"Yeah, I hear it's a daughter of noble of high social standing."

"Hmm, but even if we're talking about social status in this academy, there's the Fahrengart family and the Laurenfrost family... Isn't it like a bargain sale of nobles?"

"Hey! Would you please not lump the militaristic Fahrengart family with the true pedigree Laurenfrost family?"

"I don't care about such things... What's wrong, Kamito ?"

At any rate, Raven Class was famous for gathering the **most troublesome students**.

He just thought that if people like Claire and Rinlset were to increase in numbers, it would be... worrisome.

"In the practical skill entrance examination that took place in the morning, she seemed to be using a holy spirit ."

The maid, Carol, pulled out a memo from her cleavage .

Carol's maid memo pad— aka «Carol's Notes», was stuffed with data on the academy students and teachers... Kamito did not understand clearly what on earth she used it for.

"Hmm, a holy spirit user?..."

The holy spirit was one of the five grand element spirits, but there were not that many elementalists who used it.

It was extremely prideful and chose its own user.

Among princess maidens, it was said that it only opens its heart to especially pure noble girls.

(Even in the competition three years ago, a holy spirit user gave me a tough fight...)

After all, a holy spirit had an extremely bad compatibility with the darkness spirit Kamito was contracted with.

But then again, at that time, Kamito's strength completely surpassed the opponent elementalist's, that was why he did not lose.

"Ah, by the way, it seems like it's a very lovely big-breasted girl."

"Carol, from where on earth did you procure such information?"

"Ah, Kamito-san, are you interested?"

Carol placed her hand near her mouth and smiled.

"Hmm, you are very concerned about the information of a big-breasted admitted student, huh?"

"Eh?"

Gogogogogogogo.....!

Kamito turned around and Claire raised her eyebrows glaring at him.

"Really, men are just idiots!"

"Kamito, do you have no distinction? Are you just a beast without reason?"

Somehow, even Rinslet and Est were glaring—

Gyuuuuuuuuu!

Kamito's cheeks were pinched by the three of them.

(This is unreasonable...)

Part 2

After various things happened, the lunch of buns ended and it was time to rest.

"Ahh, that reminds me—"

Ahem! Rinslet cleared her throat and said,

"Have you gathered members for your team for the Blade Dance ?"

"...N...not yet."

Claire shook her head in shame.

Rinslet smiled, it seemed she already knew that answer.

"Ah, you still have not? It seems I've touched a sore spot."

Fufun! She held up her tea cup in an elegant maner.

Claire sullenly responded.

"It's just that there isn't a person who matches up to our desired skill level. What about you? Have you decided on your members?"

"Tha...that's ... I just have not found a person who matches with my skill level!"

"Eh? Rinslet, you couldn't gather anyone either?"

Kamito tilted his head to the side.

As one who used the demon ice spirit «Fenrir», Rinslet was about on par with Claire, ability-wise.

He thought that if it was her, she would be highly sought after but...

"Fo...for now, there isn't, for now!"

Rinslet's face reddened and she quickly turned away.

"Kamito-san, Milady—"

"Uh huh?"

Carol tugged Kamito's sleeves as she came to his side, telling him the reasons in his ear.

"The truth is... *mumbling*..."

"Hmm..."

According to Carol's words—

It seemed that although she had tried gathering a team several times, so far, the ideals she demanded from her members were too high and her excessively big pride didn't help things go smoothly either. The teams she gathered repeatedly broke up and so, there were no students left to invite.

...How should he say it, it was indeed a Rinslet-like reason.

"Hmm, her pride is certainly high but... she is a good girl, regardless."

"That's right..."

Carol earnestly nodded.

"Carol, what are you talking about with Kamito-san!?"

"It was about the order in which Milady washes her body in the bath."

"Carol!"

Glancing at the playful ojou-sama and her maid, Claire sighed deeply.

"Haa... I wonder if there's really no one... An excellent elementalist who will enter our team."

"...We...well, you seem to be in a dire situation."

Ahem.

Rinslet coughed and looked at Claire with one eye.

"That's right. I better try approaching the newly admitted student you just mentioned. Perhaps I'll get lucky."

"That is right. However, there might be an even better member for the team and she might be unexpectedly close."

Ahem. Ahem.

...Kamito finally realized.

(Ahh, I see. So that's the reason she brought up the subject of the team.)

"Hey, Claire, give me just a minute—"

"What? Faa, do..don't suddenly breathe into my ear."

"What are you turning red for? Lend me your ear for a while and listen."

Kamito whispered into Claire's ear in a quiet voice.

"For some reason, this ojou-sama obviously wants to join us as a comrade but are you against it?"

"Absolutely against it."

Claire immediately replied.

"Why? Rinslet's is more than adequate with her battle strength."

"That's... even I recognize her strength. However, no. We suffered in the duel with Ellis a while ago, didn't we? Because she didn’t even think the slightest about teamwork."

"Well, wh..."

It was certain that in the duel with Ellis' group the other day, despite being a sniper, she was standing in the most conspicuous place for some reason and was knocked down in the very beginning.

"Be...besides, Rinslet ... about you ..."

"Hn? Did you say something?"

"I..it's nothing, at any rate, it's a no! No Rinslet!"

"Err, this goes without saying, but isn't she somewhat pitiful?"

"Wh...what are you two sneakily talking about?!"

While twirling the front of her platinum blonde hair with her index finger, Rinslet was staring at them with a fidgety, nervous expression.

"Wh...?"

"....."

Claire groaned seemingly unhappy.

"...I got it. I'll try asking for the time being."

She sighed deeply and nodded. There were two months remaining till the opening of the Blade Dance. She might have reconsidered and accepted that it wasn't the time to be making a fuss about her desires anymore.

"Hey, Rinslet."

"Wh...what is it, Claire Rouge?"

Rinslet tensed and her voice sounded slightly excited.

"You wouldn't, by any chance, want to enter my team?
"

"Id...idiot, you're asking too bluntly!"

Kamito shouted in a soft voice.

Asking Rinslet, who was a highly prideful girl, in such a way—

Rinslet's finger, which was twirling a lock of her hair stopped.

"Hm, if you think about what you suddenly said—"

She placed her hand at her waist and pointed at Claire in a thrust.

"Aren't you the ones who want to join my team?"

"Huh?"

Claire's eyebrows sternly lifted up.

"What are you saying? Are you an idiot? You'll join my team!"

"Rejected, rejected, rejected. You two will join my team !"

The two ojou-sama started quarreling about something trivial.

...They completely wouldn't see eye to eye.

"Either way is the same, right..."

Kamito retorted,

"It's completely different!" "It is completely different!"

They shouted together. Only at a time like this were their breaths in sync.

"...Uhm, these two are hopeless, it would be absolutely impossible for them to be a team."

"Really, can't you guys keep quiet? This is a public place!"

A cold voice resounded in the salon café.

Everybody turned around—

At the entrance, a ponytailed beautiful girl, wearing light armor, was standing.

"Ellis!"

Claire sullenly groaned. ...Another hindrance came. She had an expression saying that.

Ellis Fahrengart.

The captain of the Sylphid Knights, who observed the academy's public morals.

She was charming in appearance which was completely opposite to her strict personality. Her relationship with Claire's group, which normally caused problems, seemed to be mutually bad.

Although, it did not mean that she was such a hard-to-deal-with person to Kamito.

At first, when he entered into the academy, just because he was a male elementalist, she was prejudiced against him, but she had already remorsefully apologized to him regarding that matter.

Even if there were times she was a little too serious she was a straightforward person, who held a strong belief for their own case. He could respect that part of her that held the pride of a knight.

Ellis walked, briskly, towards their table.

"Captain-sama, what business do you have with us?"

"If it's about the duel, I'll accept a rematch anytime."

Rinslet and Claire, both gained a dangerous glint in their eyes.

On that subject, the duel the other day remained unsettled because of the demon spirit's sudden intrusion.

He wondered if they were going to try to conclude that match again.

(.....Spare me. A duel again, no thanks.)

Coming closer, Ellis looked down at Claire with sharp eyes.

"Hmm, I have no problem settling it here and now, Claire Rouge."

"Just what I want."

Ellis drew out her sword and Claire also pulled out her leather whip from under her skirt.

In the tense atmosphere, the girls, who occupied the surrounding tables, stood up rattling.

"Hey, Claire..."

Kamito attempted to stop it—

"Ca-Captain, calm down!"

"Y...you can't draw out a sword here!"

From the café's entrance, two girls run in with flustered looks.

They were wearing the same Knights armor as Ellis.

One was a short haired and boyish and the other a somehow serious looking girl with braided hair.

Kamito immediately recognized them both. They were the Knights he fought in the duel the other day.

If he remembered right, their names were— Rakka, for the one with the short hair, and Reishia, for the one with the braids.

Stopped by her comrades, Ellis sheathed her sword embarrassed.

"...S...Sorry, my Knights followers."

Feeling ashamed, she cleared her throat and apologized to the two girls—

Then she turned towards Kamito.

"Kazehaya Kamito."

"Me?"

Kamito tilted his head to the side, seemingly puzzled. Claire aside, he certainly did not recall doing anything to be kept an eye on by the Knights.

"It seems you lost completely to the Wolverine Class in this morning's match."

"What?! As I thought, you're trying to pick a fight."

Claire stood up with a clank sound.

"That's not it. Th...the truth is Kazehaya Kamito, you—"

Ellis shook her head, and rapidly blushed and bashfully looked down.

"Hn, what's the matter?"

"So, err..."

"Come on, Captain, it is embarrassing so you better say it quickly."

"You're always so resolute but at times like this you are too slow."

Reishia and Rakka were whispering behind Ellis.

"However, such a timid captain is also cute."

"Ahh, it's like that, it's almost like a girl who has fallen in love—"

"D...don't make fun of me! I...I am really not thinking about such an insolent person!"

Ellis shouted with her face turned bright red.

After that she coughed to cover their whispers up.

"It is certain that I've gotten a better opinion of you because of that day's case, but ... that's all. The one I admire is a pure strong female like the Strongest Blade Dancer Ren Ashbell. It's most certainly not a boy!"

"..."

With half-opened eyes, Kamito gazed at Ellis, who informed him about that in a cold voice.

(...I'm sorry, your admired female is an illusion.)

"Unh, wh..what's with that look!"

Ellis thrust her sword at the back of Kamito's neck.

"Is it that strange for me to be admiring Ren Ashbell?"

"...N...no, that's not it!"

Kamito panicked and shook his head.

At the event three years ago— the dance of the participant, left a strong impression on the girls of the same generation. Henceforth, many princess maidens, who aimed to become elementalists aspired to be like her .

It seemed that Ellis was not an exception either.

"That's enough, quickly state your business."

"Shut up, I know that!"

After turning and retorting to Claire, Ellis stared at Kamito again.

"Kazehaya Kamito—"

"Wh...what..."

"Err, what I'm saying is, ..."

Ellis seemed nervous as her hand was lightly trembling.

By the way, she didn’t move the sword from his neck, so he couldn’t help but feel his life in danger.

"What I'm saying is... I...I want you!"

"..."

—Silence fell upon the cafe.

Claire and the others, even Rakka and Reshia, were dumbfounded.

For a while, time froze.

"Wh...wh...wh..wh..."

Claire was the first one who opened her mouth.

Her face was bright red and her mouth opened and closed repeatedly.

"...!?"

Ellis widened her eyes, seemingly taken aback and shook her head.

"Th...that's not it… my words… just now… I didn't mean it!"

"Wh-wh-what other possible meaning could those words have!?"

"I wanted to say, th...that—"

After Ellis took a deep breath,

"Kazehaya Kamito, would you join my team?"

"Eh?"

Kamito did not believe his ears when those unexpected words came out.

(...Ellis and me, a team?)

"What did you say?"

Claire and Rinslet were also staring in wonder.

Rakka and Reshia saw Ellis turn bright red, and were grinning.

"...Wait! Wh-what do you mean?"

"I...I meant just that. Kazehaya Kamito, I welcome you to my team. Because you defeated that militarized spirit, there's nothing to object about with regards to your ability."

Ellis replied fast and quickly averted her eyes, trying not to look at him.

It seemed her true intention was to scout Kamito.

But with a sword held at the back of his neck, rather than being scouted, it looked like he was being threatened.

Ellis' results were straight at the top of class. If Kamito joined this team, in all likelihood his chances to obtain the entry qualifications for the Blade Dance would greatly increase.

However—

"Ellis, I—"

"No way, this is my contracted spirit after all!"

The one who interrupted Kamito's reply with a shout was Claire.

She stood up from the chair and tightly grabbed the sleeves of Kamito's uniform.

"Claire, you..."

Kamito turned around and looked down only for his eyes to met her clear ruby pupils.

Claire's had an anxious look in her eyes.

It was likely that she was not aware of it, but she was staring at him pleadingly.

(I see, she's...)

It seemed that being betrayed by her sister, Rubia, caused a deep wound to her heart.

After being abandoned by someone, it could not be helped that things like that frightened her.

That was why she kept to herself. She could not depend on anyone.

Because she was afraid of being betrayed again—

"..."

Kamito took a sharp breath and scratched his head.

(...Being shown such a face...)

With a wry smile, he gently placed his hand on top of Claire's head.

His reply was obvious from the beginning. She did not have to be worried.

"Ellis, sorry, but I am her contracted spirit. I don't intend to change teams."

"...Kamito!?"

Claire, taken aback, raised her face and widened her eyes.

"...I see."

Ellis tightly bit her lips.

However, the next moment, she had already returned to her cold expression.

"...I understand. I'm sorry for asking something unreasonable so suddenly."

"No, me too ... thank you for inviting me."

Kamito apologized and Ellis was a little bashful.

"I...it's alright. It's solely because you're that sort of person, I—"

"Uh?"

Ellis seemed to have said something, but her voice was so soft he didn't catch it.

"Ahh, you've been rejected."

"It's alright, the captain has us."

"Y...you guys... I...it's not like that!"

Ellis turned bright red and shouted at her two comrades, who were grinning teasingly at her.

"H...hey, Kamito..." Claire said

"Hn?"

While still holding Kamito's uniform sleeve, she tried to shyly say something else.

"What's the matter?"

"...Th...thank...you."

"...? What?"

She told him something, but her voice was too soft, so he could not hear her well.

It was unusual for Claire to be so hesitant.

"S...so... erm..."

And at that moment. Bam! The door opened—

"Is the licentious… no— Kazehaya Kamito here?!"

An academy student came running into the salon café.

She seemed to have come here in a great hurry so she was out of breath.

(Wait, it seems like she was about to say licentious beast just now...)

"I'm here."

Kamito raised his hand and the girl stroked her chest in relief.

"The headmistress is calling for you. So, go over there immediately."

"Greyworth?"

Part 3

At a corner of the Academy Town that was part of Areishia Spirit Academy…

At a table of a coffee lounge, which greatly stuck out on the outside, a strange set of customers was sitting.

One of them was a black haired girl dressed in a jet-black dress.

Darkness spirit Restia. The perpetrator who caused the militarized spirit from the imperial capital to go mad and brought great damage to Academy Town a week ago.

And the other one was a thin boy with darkish skin and steel-like hard black hair.

He had good looks, but there was something strange about him. It was the pair of red eyes glowing slightly.

The two of them should have drawn a lot of attention, but not only did no one around them pay them any note, it seemed that nobody could even perceive their presence .

"—So, I just have to steal that specific sealed material from the academy's library?"

"Yeah, because of the incident the other day, I am unable to get close to the academy."

"Tch, how troublesome, what do we need such a thing for again?"

The boy spat onto the ground. However, no one found fault in that.

"That thing sleeping in Mine Town is a fairly hard problem. The seal of the highest level Ordesia army spans several layers. With only the releasing ritual, how many months would it take to wake it up—"

"Hmm, the disposed militarized spirit— how are you going to collect that thing?"

"You do not have the qualifications to know her prediction, Jio."

The girl in black clothing gently shook her head. The boy clicked his tongue.

"Because you toyed with the militarized spirit of the imperial capital as you pleased, it became more difficult. Is it an order to steal it?"

"Isn't it fine, I could observe his current strength."

"I guess. Honestly though, I am disappointed. Is that all he can do? I expected more from Ren Ashbell, the strongest blade dancer."

"He has not yet woken up."

"I hope so. Even if I beat that now-cowardly guy, there would be no point in that."

"Ah, you have the confidence you can defeat him?"

"I'll beat him. And then I'll prove it. That this Jio Inzagi is the true successor of the Demon King."

The boy's red lips curved into a smirk. On his whole body, countless numbers of spirit seals started shining.

Just like the demon king Solomon he had— **the seals that carried seventy-two spirits**.

Chapter 3: The Lost Queen

Part 1

After that, Kamito, who parted from Claire and the others, made his way towards the headmistress' office immediately.

He knocked and opened the door—

"You're late, for how many seconds do you plan to make this lady wait?"

That was the first thing Greyworth, who was sitting at the office desk, coldly said.

The Dusk Witch — Greyworth Ciel Mais.

Her figure was certainly that of a bewitchingly beautiful woman, but she was originally a spirit knight with a long military service, who had her name entered first on the list of the twelve knight Numbers commanders.

She had wavy ash-blonde hair. Her gray pupils were shining behind her small pair of glasses.

"Sorry, I heard that you have business with me and no matter what my walking became heavy."

"Hmm, so now you're able to run your rather cheeky mouth, are you? Where did the obedient pure boy from those days go? Really, this thing called the flow of time is cruel."

"You're the only one who doesn't change, Greyworth. Your outward looks as well as your tricky character."

Kamito loathsomely said in disdain.

Greyworth is one of the few people who knew him three years ago.

And she was the perpetrator who called Kamito, who threw away the name Strongest Blade Dancer, to the academy and attempted to make him participate in the Blade Dance two months later.

Ren Ashbell

She did not tell him the reason for that.

Although, it was often the case that the Dusk Witch worked Kamito hard without telling him anything.

"That's right, you have certainly changed. Compared to three years ago, you've become especially weak. In the practice match a while ago, what was that sorry performance when faced with an opponent of that level? If it was the you from the past, you would have overwhelmingly defeated that one person in under three minutes."

"You were watching? ...As usual your hobbies are bad. "

"In such a sorry state, your participation qualifications for the Blade Dance are also doubtful. Or, was it a fluke that you defeated that militarized spirit?"

"That time was—"

Kamito slightly mumbled.

It was not that he defeated it with just his own strength.

Kamito, who had a chance meeting with his changed former contracted spirit and was struck with despair, was given the strength to stand once again by that red haired hellcat girl.

(...!)

Suddenly, the sensation of her soft lips was resurrected in his mind.

To shake it off and cleanse the evil thoughts, Kamito shook his head in a fluster.

"I also think that I'm miserable. I can't even fully use my contracted spirit's power yet."

Kamito dropped his eyes onto his right hand, which was engraved with a spirit seal.

"Is it that you still can't forget your previous woman? How stubborn."

"Don't mess around! For me, Restia isn't like that!"

"On the contrary, getting hotheaded makes it increasingly suspicious. If you like, how about getting a lover or something in this academy? It might even divert a little of the loneliness."

"Lov—"

"Or, are the girls in the academy too childlike? If that's the case... I'm also good."

Greyworth smiled bewitchingly and slightly pushed open her breast area with her fingertips.

He accidentally saw an adult-like, black lacy lingerie in her cleavage.

"D...don't mess around!"

"It's a joke. Hmm, with that tone, it seems that you have not yet reached that level. I've heard rumors that you made a tiny breasted beautiful girl and a naked knee-socks spirit wait upon you and are indulging in an improper harem cohabitation life."

"Guu..."

Trying to refute, Kamito was at a loss for words.

...Looking at it objectively, that was the truth and so it was painful to be unable to deny it.

"Greyworth, did you call me just to tell some worthless jokes?"

"That's right— but, of course, that's not the only thing."

Greyworth creaked her chair and faced the visitor room at the inner side of the room.

"I have a girl I want to introduce to you— okay, come in"

"Okay."

From the inner room, came what sounded like a bell being turned over.

The one who opened the door and appeared was—

A girl who wore a black dresslike uniform, different from the academy's uniform.

It was a beautiful girl, whose beautiful long black hair was impressive, to the extent that he was taken aback.

She had clear black pupils. Without thinking, Kamito was charmed by her neat and clean appearance.

"...Eh?"

The moment his eyes met with hers, she made a puzzled face for some reason.

"Errm, you're ... Kazehaya Kamito-kun?"

While blinking her eyes incessantly, the girl asked.

"Ahh, that's right, however—"

"But my impression is very..."

...It was somewhat strange, but it seemed the girl received a shock.

(Wh...what's with this?)

"But, that's right... he's a boy after all and it's already been three years."

The girl was muttering to herself in a voice that Kamito could not hear.

After that, she looked at Kamito's face again.

"Yes, there's certainly a resemblance, yeah. Besides, this is fine—"

"What's up, Fianna?"

Greyworth called out, seemingly puzzled.

"Ah, s...sorry! Err, this is the first time I've seen a male elementalist!"

The girl called Fianna shook her head in a fluster.

"Erm... who is this girl?"

Kamito faced Greyworth and asked.

Then, the girl, for some reason, made a sullen expression and pouted her lips.

"I knew it, you didn't remember... well, that's fine though."

"She is the recently admitted student who will be entering the same Raven Class as you."

"Admitted student?"

Ah! Kamito nodded. They were talking about it at the café just a while ago.

(This girl is the one...)

Carol was saying that she was a daughter of noble social status, but, in any case, in this academy the ladies of noble social status were all around him, so he did not feel anything special.

(After that, she said that... her breasts were big.)

Without thinking, he glanced towards the dress-like uniform's chest area—

(...Indeed, certainly.)

Kamito consented strangely.

"She is the Ordesia Empire's second princess, her Highness Fianna Ray Ordesia."

"...Ordesia?"

Kamito frowned for a moment—

"No way...!"

His eyes widened in surprise.

In Areishia Spirit Academy, which was an elementalist training organization, many genuine daughters of nobles were enrolled. This was the result of the empire's royalty and nobles continuing the bloodline of elementalists through marriage of convenience that even spanned over several generations.

Naturally, there were also exceptions, but, speaking of elementalists, it was normal for them to be daughters of nobles.

Fahrengart, the head of the military family, and Laurenfrost, with a family history.

Its lands were currently seized, but Claire's Elstein family was also of a noble pedigree.

However, this girl before him was— the second princess of the Ordesia Empire.

She was not even the nobility.

She was what one would call— the real princess.

(Why would the empire's princess be in the academy?)

Daughters born into the Ordesia imperial family should be scheduled to stack up training as Queen candidates, serving the Five Great Elemental Lords, at the Queen training organization, the «Divine Ritual Institute».

In any case, Kamito kept that question in his chest for now and knelt down on the ground on one knee.

"Please pardon my rudeness, your Highness."

It was not that he specifically pledged allegiance to the Ordesia Empire, but the bearing to take before the royalty was harshly driven into him by his former contracted spirit.

However, Fianna quietly shook her head.

"That's alright, we are students of the same academy here. Besides, although I'm called the second princess, I'm the Lost Queen, my social status is already gone."

"The Lost Queen?"

Kamito asked back— then he recalled.

(I see, the empire's second princess!)

He heard about it from rumors.

(If I remember it, the girl was the Queen candidate to serve the Fire Elemental Lord.)

Four years ago, the Fire Queen— Rubia Elstein's absconding happened.

The empire fell into chaos for a moment by the wrath of the Fire Elemental Lord, who learned of her treachery.

For the sake of appeasing the Fire Elemental Lord's anger, the «Divine Ritual Institute» tried to support a second Queen but—

At that time, the empire's second princess should have been supported as the successor to Rubia.

However, she never became Queen. At that time, she declared that she stepped down from the Queen candidacy for some reason and her existence was erased from the imperial family.

The reason that she had rejected to become Queen was not officially announced so far.

Henceforth, the second princess completely disappeared from the center stage.

That Lost Queen meant this girl in front of him?

"It's just as she says. As long as you pass through this academy's gates, no matter what social status the princess maidens have, there is no special treatment. Even a princess, a male elementalist, or the Calamity Queen's sister."

"There you have it, I'm the former princess, but nice to meet you, Kazehaya Kamito-kun."

Fianna smiled and picked up the sides of her skirt with her fingertips, then bowed elegantly.

"A...Ah, nice to meet you—"

Kamito stood up and his expression froze.

"What's the matter?"

"No, err..."

While scratching his face, Kamito looked away.

"?"

Fianna tilted her head to the side.

"Kyaa!"

It seemed she realized that what she was holding up was not a ball dress, but a short length uniform skirt.

Her mature black underwear, weaved with laces, was firmly etched into Kamito's retina.

"Ka...Kamito-kun... pervert."

The former princess' face turned red as she embarrassedly muttered.

"I...I'm sorry..."

"You two, don't flirt and act lovey-dovey in front of my eyes. It's irritating."

Greyworth glared at Kamito, with her eyes filled with bloodlust.

"...I'm sorry. And why did you call for me?"

About this witch. It was probably not just to introduce the admitted student.

(To introduce the empire's princess to me, what is she scheming?)

As if she read Kamito's emotions, the witch pushed up her glasses, seemingly sullen.

"It's regrettable, despite purposely preparing a special quest for your sake."

"A special quest?"

"That's right. It was just nice that I had a quest I wanted to entrust her with, so I wanted your team to accompany her as her guards."

Part 2

—A quest.

Together with official matches with fellow academy students, it was the system that supported the academy ranking system.

A given quest could set various objectives, from Kagura by a blade dance, the suppression of a rampaging spirit, the excavation and investigation of the sealed spirit, to the subjugation of elementalists gone astray.

By completing the quests that were divided into ranks depending on the danger level, the academy students could raise their team rankings just as they do by winning official matches.

"By the way, this quest's difficulty level is S rank."

"S rank?"

Without thinking, Kamito inquired back.

An S rank quest was the highest difficulty level quest in the academy's ranking.

The amount of ranking points it could net was extraordinary, but it was a dangerous quest that could even result in death, depending on the situation. It should not even be possible to sign up for it with Kamito's current ranking.

"Did you prepare things behind the scenes?"

"Your hearing is bad. I said that I don't practice special treatment. It just means that the ones suitable for this quest are Fianna and you. If you disagree, then I'll spread the word around to other teams."

"..."

It was not a bad deal. On the contrary, looking at Kamito's current team, it was a godsend.

Till the opening of the Blade Dance, there already were only two months left. No, the final examination to decide the top three participating teams would take place even earlier.

With their current pace, they could not possibly make it by the means of regular official matches and quests.

Greyworth was somehow bent on making Kamito participate in the Blade Dance.

But as one would expect, forcing in a representative of the empire through the power of the Academy's headmistress was not possible.

Therefore, she has got the S rank quest, whose danger level was high, and the completion bonus, which was also extremely high.

(If we could complete the quest, that would be it—Huh?)

He was not pleased to move in accordance to Greyworth's expectation, but??

If it was a quest to guard an important person, he had the experience of doing such things several times in the past.

Certainly, it was far better than raising the inter-school ranking steadily through the official matches.

"—I understand. Explain the details of the quest."

"That's the spirit."

Kamito prompted and Greyworth smiled.

"Do you know Mine Town Gado?"

"Gado? Well, I roughly know its name. It is a town with the mine that was abandoned a few decades ago."

Mine Town Gado. It was formerly a town with large spirit crystal mining grounds, but, during the second Ranbal war, spirit crystal deposits were exhausted, and it became a town with a completely abandoned mine.

It should certainly be a ghost town full of ruins nowadays.

"There have been frequent occurrences of strange earthquakes at that mine recently. I want you to go there and investigate that."

"Investigate the earthquakes?"

For the academy to bring in an investigation request meant that it was probably not an ordinary earthquake.

It was often the case that the earth attribute spirits that rule over the land caused the earthquakes.

If that was because a spirit was angry or was in a frenzy, it could be appeased by a ritual of a blade dance. Depending on the situation, there were also cases where a subjugation unit of spirit knights was formed.

As a quest it was relatively typical, but—

"Stop joking. Why is an ordinary earthquake investigation an S rank quest?"

He did not think that such level of danger would be involved if it was just an ordinary earth spirit investigation.

Compared to the quest's risk, the assigned rank seemed too high.

"You're being distrustful as usual, can't you trust my good will?"

"Can I trust it? You never lie. However, you also never speak the truth."

"Hmm...well, it is indeed like that."

Greyworth smiled and shrugged her shoulders in resignation.

"At that mine, it seems a strategic-class militarized spirit, who was sealed by the old Ordesia Knights, is sleeping there."

"A strategic-class militarized spirit...!?"

Kamito spontaneously groaned. Fianna beside him also gasped in surprise.

A strategic-class militarized spirit— it could not be compared to the giant spirit that went into frenzy at the Academy Town the other day.

Because of its tremendous strength, it was impossible for an individual to control it. In the end, it could only be controlled by ritual Kagura performed by several hundred elementalists— it was surely a weapon of mass destruction.

At the end of the second Ranbal war, the continental nations signed a treaty, and all the seven bodies should have sealed and disposed of such spirits, but—

"Don't tell me, the one causing the earthquake is that strategic-class militarized spirit?"

"At the very worst; it's only a possibility. I want to entrust you guys with this investigation. If your investigation confirms that the seal has come undone—"

"I'll perform the ritual of resealing by the «Ritual Kagura»."

Fianna calmly opened her mouth to speak.

"That's right. For you, who is the former Queen candidate, this quest suits you perfectly."

"...I see, that's the reason you called for this princess."

The Queens, who served the Five Great Elemental Lords, were the experts in the «Ritual Kagura» that appeased spirits.

They did not receive any special martial arts training, and as the result they were not suited for battle, but all forms of ritual have been driven into their bodies since they were children.

In the entire academy, there was only one former Queen academy student— a rare special skill user; the quest could only be accomplished with her, and considering that it had to do with a strategic-class militarized spirit, it might also be appropriate to set it as an S rank quest.

"..."

The terms were not bad. However, there was one more thing that he had to ask.

"...But is Fianna alright with this? With the guard being me."

If it was just about guarding her, there should have been even more competent elementalists.

For example, Ellis Fahrengart. If it was her, whose sense of responsibility was strong and who also had the ability, there would be no shortcomings to her being a guard.

There were no merits for the princess to have Kamito, who was a boy, as her guard. If Greyworth grouped them together as she pleased, ignoring Fianna's will— he planned to reject this deal.

However, Fianna—

"Of course, I'll be relying on you, Kamito-kun."

"Did Greyworth threaten you to group with me?"

"No, after all, I was the one who nominated you."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. To travel with the world's only male elementalist, isn't it great?"

Fianna entwined her fingers with Kamito's hand and gazed with upturned eyes.

Peering into her clear black pupils, Kamito spontaneously felt shock.

"Hmm, aren't you popular?"

Greyworth said, seemingly displeased, and handed over a document with the quest's key points written on it .

"If you intend to take up this quest, then sign here. This should not be a bad deal for you."

It was not bad, far from that, it was an extraordinary deal for Kamito in the current circumstances.

However—

"I can't decide this by myself. I have to at least ask Claire too."

"Hmm, well, that's alright. But hurry, I'll have you leave tomorrow."

"Claire?"

The one who raised her voice was Fianna.

"Ah, my team member, but—"

"Could she happen to be Claire Elstein?"

"...You know her?"

Kamito awkwardly scratched his head.

(That's right, this girl is... the Queen candidate to the Fire Elemental Lord.)

She was the princess maiden who was training at the same «Divine Ritual Institute» as the Calamity Queen—Rubia Elstein.

If that was the case, it would not be strange for her to know even Claire, that girl's sister.

"That person's sister..."

Fianna's lips slightly trembled.

She might be having regrets after hearing that the Calamity Queen's sister was one of the teammates.

"I'm sorry, but Claire is my teammate. I'll accomplish the quest together with her."

Kamito informed her—

"Yes, that's what I wish for as well."

As Fianna nodded, she muttered in a soft voice.

"**I don't plan on losing to even the sister**."

Part 3

As the two of them left the office, Greyworth smiled.

"However, that princess did something bold as well."

"—you knew, Headmistress?"

From inside of the Greyworth's shadow, a lady quickly appeared.

Shadow elementalist— Teacher Freya Grandol.

"Is it about her using spirit crystals during the entrance examination? Of course, I noticed it. She did something impious. Doesn't that stone cost twenty million rood apiece?"

"Then, I presume you are overlooking this unfair entry , right?"

"Princess Fianna was ranked next to that Rubia Elstein as the second Queen candidate at the age of thirteen. If

she wakes up as an elementalist again, isn't it the best bargain?"

"However, if she tries to lead her academy life using that thing, wouldn't she be instantly exposed?"

"I think that's something she also understands. She understands it and yet she became the academy's student . If she does not awaken, that would be the end to it, but if she awakens, it would be a fortune. Therefore, I grouped her with that boy."

"Headmistress, what on earth are you—"

Freya frowned and at that moment a winged eyeball flew in from the office window.

It was a probe-use spirit, used by Greyworth.

"Hmm, it seems that an uninvited guest has infiltrated the Academy Town."

"Is it the darkness spirit from the other day?"

"Well, I wonder? I do not know what they are aiming for, but... Freya Grandol, go prepare the order for the Sylphid Knights to strengthen the security."

Part 4

Kamito, who left the office, took Fianna on a tour around the academy building.

She had an elegant light manner of walking. It seemed that a real princess' way of walking was also polished.

"Fianna, are you wearing the «Divine Ritual Institute»' s uniform?"

"Yes, as opposed to the Areishia Spirit Academy, it seems to be a recent design. During the time I was active, it used to be an even more bombastic ritual costume. That was cute in a way, but all the girls were definitely yearning for skirts."

"...Hmm, is that so? It suits you."

"Ah, even if it's just flattery, I am happy."

As they were talking while walking, Kamito's tone had relaxed tremendously.

Since she was the Ordesia Empire princess and a princess maiden from the «Divine Ritual Institute»— he was thinking that there would be an

even-harder-to-approach atmosphere, but she was a surprisingly easy girl to talk to.

The two of them, who had such conversation while walking along the corridor, were already basked in the attention of other academy students.

"Hey, take a look. Kazehaya Kamito, again, is going to rape the admitted student!" "The licentious beast's special demonstration." "But I might be a little envious." "Wh... what are you saying!" "B...but if I was to be gazed at by those sharp eyes...I...I might be unable to defy." "It's just for a mere little while only, a little while only, I want to try being played with... don't you think so?" "Th...that's true, I...if he were to approach with force... my heart would surely be pounding." " No way, after all, he's the Demon King, the Demon King that devours any girl he can lay his hands on." "The Demon King..." "The Demon King of the night..."

A soft commotion like that could have been heard from the whole corridor.

(...What! The Demon King of the night!)

He wanted to retort numerous remarks, but it seemed like it would become really troublesome, so he did not.

He had already gotten used to the girls' frightened gazes.

However, it was strange, but there also were numerous girls sending him passionate gazes for some reason.

And then, for some reason, there seemed to be ribbon-tied letters and homemade sweets placed in his locker.

...Well, it might be just a prank.

"Hmm, Kamito-kun, you're quite popular."

"They're just teasing me, after all, I'm the only male in this academy."

"I wonder?"

Mugyu!

"...!?"

Suddenly, he felt a soft sensation at his upper arm.

Fianna pressed her breasts onto Kamito's arm.

"H...hey, Fianna!?"

"Hn, what's the matter?"

The princess expressed an impish smile with an upward glance.

The throbbing of his heart would not stop with that proper softness pressed onto his arm.

"No, princess... err, your breasts are hitting..."

"I do not mind. Or—"

Fianna gave a short teasing smile.

"Do you dislike an immodest princess?"

"..."

From the breast area of the dress-like uniform, her black lingerie was slightly in sight.

...He was troubled, earth-shatteringly troubled.

He felt like the sharpness of the gazes of the girls passing by along the corridor was gradually increasing.

Fianna was enjoyably gazing at Kamito, who has tensed up.

"Fufu, it seems like everyone is jealous."

"That's definitely not it..."

Kamito sighed deeply,

"By the way, why did princess enroll into this academy ?"

Suddenly, he tried to ask something that was on his mind since a while ago.

He did not care for the circumstances that made her throw away her position as a Queen candidate. He was just curious as to why she became a student of the academy now, after having once disappeared from the center stage.

"That's—"

Fianna's legs suddenly stopped. Kamito also stopped at the same time.

"Uh?"

"If I said— I came to meet Kamito-kun, would you believe me?"

"...?"

As Kamito was a little puzzled,

"No, it can't be that you came to meet me, haven't we just met, Fianna?"

"..."

Fianna pouted her lips as if she was a little sullen hearing such a reply from Kamito.

"...Idiot."

Fianna muttered and pushed her index finger softly onto Kamito's lips.

And then, she drew her face closer till her lips barely touched him.

"—Ren Ashbell."

At that moment, Kamito's expression froze.

With the unexpected name coming from her mouth— he was at a loss for words.

"...!? H...ow..."

Standing still and dumbfounded, Kamito leaked out a dry voice.

The only people who knew Kamito's true identity as Ren Ashbell are the contracted spirit Restia and the witch Greyworth— those two people only.

How did this girl...?

"...I knew it, you don't remember."

Fianna pouted her lips, seemingly displeased.

Making such a face at this distance made it look as if she were a lover pestering for a kiss.

"It's alright. I'll keep it a secret from everyone, I did promise after all."

"Promised?"

Kamito seemed to have recalled something, at that moment.

"Kamito!"

Claire came running from the other side of the corridor . It seemed that she was searching for Kamito.

"Come on, what in the world were—"

At that point, Claire suddenly stopped.

In the middle of the corridor, she saw the two's posture, which was almost like a couple kissing—

"Y...yo...yo...yo..."

Gogogo... her shoulders began to tremble bit by bit.

Her red hair bristled up like a crimson flame and blazed up tremblingly.

"Yo...yo...you slave... yo...you truly have no discretion.. ."

Pishii!—The moment her whip made a sound, the hell cat, cladded in red hot flames, appeared from an empty space.

The hell cat transformed into the Flame Tongue form in an instant and settled into Claire's right hand.

"Th...that's alright, I'll thoroughly train you today..."

"Wa...wait, don't misunderstand, Claire, this girl is—"

"—Claire?"

Fianna reacted to that name Kamito said.

She gently parted her arms from Kamito and glared at Claire with a sharp look.

"I see, you are Claire Rouge."

"That's right. So what?"

"You are that person's sister..."

He felt like invisible fireworks scattered in Fianna's eyes glaring at Claire.

Chapter 4: Cat Fight

Part 1

"Neeveeer, I won't accept this!"

It was evening. Claire's angry voice reverberated throughout the Raven Class dormitory.

"I've already had to concede to her joining the team temporarily due to the guarding quest, but—"

She brushed her red twin-tail hair in irritation.

"Why is this girl in the same room with us?!"

She faced Fianna, who was drinking her cup of black tea in elegant small sips, and thrust her finger toward her .

Turning away standoffishly, Fianna sighed and muttered.

"What a small room, I wouldn't have thought that this is a place where a noble would live in."

"Sh...Shut up! If you have complaints, why don't you take it up to the headmistress?"

"What I am talking about is how messy the room is. Can't you catch the sarcasm of the remark?"

"Grh... I...It's usually properly tidied up!"

Kamito sighed as he was at his wits' end. These two have already been like this for some time now.

"Hey, Kamito-kun, don't you think so too?"

"Err, well..."

Casting a glance at Claire who was on the verge of tears, Kamito answered vaguely.

"That reminds me, Ren Ashbell's true identity—"

"Ahh, it's certainly messy. Claire should at least clean it up."

Claire bit her lips with teary eyes.

(...Sorry, Claire. I'm unable to defy this princess.)

Somehow, the girl knew Kamito's true identity.

Kamito's intent was to quickly press the question, but, in this situation, Claire would also learn about it.

This princess seemed to have no intention of telling the secret to Claire, but she had been threatening him by leaking that name since a while ago.

Feeling like a cat on hot bricks, Kamito tediously sighed.

While the invisible fireworks scattered, Est was playing with Scarlet with a green foxtail.

It seemed that Claire realized that she was no match for Fianna in the battle of words and diverted the flow of the argument to Kamito.

"Besides, why should it be my room?!"

"Well, because you're the only person in the dormitory who occupies the room just by herself."

"It's not only me, even not just two of us. Including Est, it's three people."

"Aren't you treating me as your slave spirit? By the dormitory rules, spirits are not counted as roommates."

"Uh, that's so, but..."

"Well, with all of us, I guess the room will be cramped, as expected. I'll leave."

In the first place, Kamito should have been living in a hut outside.

Moreover, it would be no good if rumors about a guy sleeping in a girl's room were to spread.

"Hey, what are you going to do when you leave? Do you plan on going as far as sleeping outdoors?"

"For the time being, a tent would be sufficient. I'll manage one way or another."

Claire grabbed the back of Kamito's neck as he tried to leave the room.

"What?"

"No."

"Huh?"

"That's no good. After all, if you're gone..."

Claire looked downwards and tightly bit her lips.

"Who will do the cooking and the laundry?!"

"...Err, you do it."

"No way. After all, the meals you make are delicious..."

It seemed that Claire, who used to live on canned food, had her stomach held captive by Kamito's home cooking.

"Besides, if you were to leave, wouldn't that mean you and Est are left all alone together. That's no good. Rinslet

and, like just now, Ellis may come meddling. No, it's not just Ellis and the others. After all, there are many girls targeting you out of curiosity."

"If I'm being targeted...Est and I can fend off most of them."

"T...That's not what I meant... Stupid."

Claire released her hold on the back of his neck.

"Y...You are mine after all. I'll not give you to anyone."

"...Even if you say that..."

Kamito softly sighed—

"Hey, what do you mean by yours?"

Fianna muttered in soft tone.

"Claire Rouge, what kind of relationship do you have with Kamito-kun?"

"Wh...What kind of relationship...? That's..."

Claire bashfully blushed,

"A...A sl...slave and a master relationship!"

"Wh...What did you say...!?"

Fianna looked at Kamito with an astonished look.

"D...Don't tell me, you have such an insane relationship..."

"Wait, don't utter something that'll cause misunderstandings!"

"Hm...hmm, besides, what kind of relationship do you have with Kamito? Despite being a freshly admitted student, aren't you being very intimate?"

In reverse, Claire was the one asking back this time.

When she did, Fianna coughed—

"Me? I'm... his little sister, Kamito's."

"Eh!"

"...? A sister, I..."

"Hey, listen, the truth is that Ren Ashbell's true identity—"

"Ye...Yes, she is my little sister, my little sister!"

Fianna murmured the magic words and Kamito nodded right away.

"Li...Little sister... I see, so you had a little sister."

Claire stroked her chest for some reason.

"However, I'm his stepsister."

"Stepsister!?"

"That's right, furthermore, a naughty stepsister."

"A nau...naughty stepsister!?"

Claire's face turned bright red in a split second.

(...What on earth was she imagining?)

"Here's a hint, a stepsister can be married to her brother, right, onii-sama ♪"

Suddenly, Fianna tightly pressed her large breasts unto him.

Kamito was spontaneously startled by that duly soft sensation—

"Wh...Wh...Wh...? Id...Idiot, you brute pervert!"

"Ouch, wait, it's a misunderstanding, stop—"

For some reason, tears welled up in Claire's eyes as she hit Kamito with her whip. Pishi! Pishi!

"Hey, what are you doing to Kamito-kun!"

Phishi!—Fianna grabbed Claire's arm that swung up.

"Uh, wh...what!"

"Kamito-kun isn't your slave."

"Yeah, that's right."

Kamito nodded.

"He is mine."

"No, I'm not yours either, you know?"

Kamito retorted with half-opened eyes.

(...Good grief, I wonder why such people are all around me.)

"Too bad. Kamito is my slave spirit, after all...??"

"After all?"

As Fianna asked back, Claire's cheeks slight blushed,

"After all, err... I even...did the spirit contract ritual with Kamito."

"..."

Fianna opened her mouth.

She faced Kamito, whose head was made to squeak.

"Hey, is that true? Kamito-kun."

She had a devilish smile.

"No, that's..."

Honestly, he was getting embarrassed just by recalling that time.

He turned bright red and cast down his eyes, which was roughly the same reaction Claire's shown.

(If it was that embarrassing, then don't mention it)— was what he thought, but...

After witnessing such a reaction from both of them, Fianna calmly muttered.

"I see... You kissed."

Her tone was certainly calm, but it was the tone that concealed something dreadful.

...She was angry. She was certainly angry.

(No, why is Fianna angry in the first place?)

As Kamito showed a doubtful expression, Fianna quickly stood up—

Faced Claire, who was bashfully turning red and sharply thrust her index finger at her.

"Let's have a match, Claire Rouge!"

"A match?"

"Yes, a match, where the winner is the one who can love Kamito-kun."

"No...No way, not such a thing! To begin with, Kamito is originally mine!"

"I've been saying that's not it..."

Kamito tried to cut into their conversation, but the two of them didn't seem to hear him.

"If you win, I'll leave this room. Then, you can do all the perverted things you'd like with Kamito-kun, just the two of you."

"I...I...I won't do such things!"

"Ahh, then, is doing it by yourself more to your liking?"

"Wh...Wh...Wh...What are...?"

Claire turned bright red and the steam vented from her head.

(...She was thoroughly toyed with.)

Claire was extremely weak toward the reprehension in such an area, she was a super innocent ojou-sama.

"Or perhaps, you have no confidence? You just don't want me to take away Kamito-kun?"

Fianna further provoked Claire, who had finally snapped.

"Guu... A...As you wish! Come forth, scorching hot hellcat!"

She summoned Scarlet and held in her hand an elemental waffe— Flame Tongue.

"Hey, do you plan on destroying the dormitory?! The people from the Sylphid Knights will dash here!"

"It's alright, because I'll settle it before they come."

"That's completely not alright!"

Claire-san, her eyes were serious. ...She was determined.

"Don't be in such a hurry, Claire Rouge."

However, Fianna waved her hand with a composed expression.

"What, now that it has come to this, are you pleading for your life?"

"I didn't say anything about having a match in blade dance. I wonder if trying to settle everything with violence is something proper nobles do. Did all the nutrition that's supposed to go to your head go to your breasts—"

Fianna looked at Claire's breasts and smiled.

"—I guess that's not the case."

"Burn all to nothing, red hot inferno ball!"

"Wait, Claire! Stop the spirit magic!"

Kamito flustered and held her hands to her back as Claire tried to recite fireball.

At their best, they were hovering near the bottom of the inter-school ranking. If they caused any more problems, «Team Scarlet»'s score would drop to the lowest rank.

"Guu...then, what kind of match are we having?!"

"Yeah—"

Placing her index finger at her chin, Fianna slowly looked around the room.

—Then, her gaze stopped on a mountain of canned food, piled up in the kitchen.

Kamito overlooked that her eyes were sparkling.

"Then, the first one who satisfies Kamito's body, wins — How's that?"

"Sa...Satisfies his body...!?"

Claire's face turned bright red.

"No...no way, not such a thing! After all, I don't know any skillful methods... that's not it, su...such a thing is definitely not allowed!"

"I don't know what kind of misunderstanding you're having, but what I'm talking about is a culinary showdown?"

"Culinary!?"

Claire's face froze.

It was natural. The first time he met her, she was only eating canned food.

She couldn't possibly cook something decent.

"No way, I can't accept such a duel!"

"Ah, offering a meal for a spirit to enjoy itself is the same type of «Kagura» as a blade dance, a skill of a splendid elementalist. Isn't it also among the academy's core subjects?"

"Th...That's..."

"Or, are you lacking confidence? ...Like that chest of yours."

She snapped. At that moment, the sound of something snapping was heard.

"I...I get it..."

"Uh?"

"I...I accept it, this culinary match!"

Claire faced Fianna and sharply thrust her finger at her as she accepted the match.

At that moment, the princess expressed an impish smile.

(By the way, Claire, she has seen through the fact that you're weak in cooking!)

Part 2

Just like that, the culinary showdown between the two of them somehow began, but—

The two beautiful girls, who put on aprons, were standing at opposite sides of the kitchen.

It was the common kitchen at the first floor of the Raven Class dormitory. It seemed that as long as one was a boarding student, it was alright to freely use the ingredients available there.

Est the judge sat well behaved at the table and was tightly grasping a spoon.

While being nervous about the other meaning of having Scarlet take care of the leftovers, Kamito paced around the back of the kitchen.

(...Frankly, Claire has no chance of winning.)

He certainly had never eaten Claire's home cooking, but, in any case, she was the ojou-sama who got through with mostly canned food in her meals since she came to the academy.

"Ehh, canned tuna, mackerel tuna... and I splurge a little and also open the canned crab."

While humming, Claire arranged the canned food ingredients. Kamito had doubts about approving her combination of canned food, but, for now, it looked edible, so Kamito took a breath of relief.

"Fruits are easy to eat after being cut."

Upon seeing Claire slowly taking out the kitchen knife, Kamito interrupted her.

"Are you alright with that? Don't cut your finger."

"I'm alright, after all, I was always watching you prepare food."

"I see... Hn, you were always watching?"

"Idi... Th...That's not it, I do not mean something like that!"

"Waah, it's dangerous, don't swing the kitchen knife!"

Bun! Kamito splendidly dodged the kitchen knife, which grazed his nose tip.

"Hmm, be...because you said something stupid!"

Claire's face, up till her ears, was bright red and she quickly turned away.

"Putting that aside, what on earth are you making?"

"Seafood curry, the one that you often make. Because I like that."

"Eh, you don't normally use canned tuna and canned mackerel for seafood curry, you know?"

It seemed that she tossed the ingredients into the sauce from what she learned by watching him.

"Sh...shut up... It's not like there's a reason to the fishes' name one by one. It's the same as not remembering the face of the partner whom you danced with at the ball."

"...That's terrible. Do remember that."

Besides Claire's character, just her appearance was that of a transcendent beautiful girl. He was certain without doubt that there would be as many young nobles as the number of stars, who would be hard-pressed by her lovely looks and ask her for a dance.

"...At any rate, Claire, you're in a dress?"

"What, I was once too the daughter of a Duke family before my lands were seized, so I do at least wear dresses ... Or perhaps, is it that I look strange wearing a dress?"

"No, I just thought that you looked good wearing it."

"...Wh...Wh...What are you saying, idiot."

Kamito spoke his honest thoughts and Claire turned red increasingly and looked downwards.

She slightly raised her head and looked at Kamito with an upward glance—

"Hey, do you re...really... think I look good?"

"Yea, I think that your red hair looks pretty with that pure white dress.... I don't want to admit it, but honestly just your looks are prettier than any princesses."

"...!"

"Well, while wearing a dress, your breasts volume is overwhelmingly lacking though. Using paddings there to make do with it is the only—"

Then, Kamito suddenly shut his mouth.

Gogogogogogogo... The kitchenware were clattering.

...It seemed that he stepped on another unnecessary landmine again.

"Ah...no... I'm sorry."

"...Th...Th...That's right. Unless I use paddings, I can't even wear a dress, right?"

"Hey, Claire, why are you holding such a thing? That's a handy tool you use to peel vegetables, it's not something you use on people... owaa, wai—"

Part 3

"Kuu, I can't believe that there's such a way to use a vegetable peeler..."

As Kamito cursed, he turned up at Fianna's corner this time.

There were numerous scars like cat-scratches on his cheeks.

"Despite being poor at using the cookware, she completely mastered using it as a weapon."

At this rate, the day that Claire's elemental waffe became a peeler from a whip might also be close.

(Turn into bonito flakes...? What a terribly unpleasant future.)

While pressing down on his cheeks, which were suffering a prickling pain, he was thinking about such a thing,

"—Hmm, you two are on pretty good terms."

Raising her face from the chopping board, Fianna said with half-opened eyes.

Somehow, she seemed a little displeased.

"Is that how it looks like? Princess, your eyes are also surprisingly bad."

"Not everything you see is the truth— That was a saying from a certain senior of mine."

"That indeed seems like words that a princess maiden of the «Divine Ritual Institute» would say."

Kamito shrugged his shoulders and stood beside Fianna.

She was slicing a carrot with a nice tapping rhythm.

Because she was a «Kagura» expert, who pleased spirits, as expected her skill was good.

"You seem full of confidence."

"Of course. During the time at the «Divine Ritual Institute», although there was a ritual to offer cooked meals to high ranking spirits only once a month, all of them were satisfied with my offered meals and returned to Astral Zero."

"Really? That's amazing."

Kamito was honestly in admiration. That seemed to be a great expectation. Naturally, because appearance was more important than taste for the meals offered to spirits, he wondered if it would differ from the cooking humans eat.

"By the way, what was that one bottle you poured into the pot just now?"

"Capsicum. I'm using it as a subtle seasoning."

"I see, a subtle seasoning."

A subtle seasoning. The soup in the pot certainly became red and was making the ingredients subtle to see .

However, did subtle seasoning generally have such a meaning?

"...Is that okay?"

"Yea, it has such a vibrant and pretty color, doesn't it?"

...That somehow invited anxiety, but he gave up on investigating it.

Fianna nodded, seemingly satisfied, and cast her sights onto the chopping board again.

While listening to the rhythmic tapping sound, Kamito gazed at Fianna's face profile.

She had black pupils of long slits and virgin-snow-like white skin.

Her black hair, which reached down to her waist, was currently tied up to not let it fall.

Her white nape was mysteriously erotic.

Without thinking, Kamito was charmed by that somewhat mature face profile.

(With just tying her hair up, her impression has greatly changed...?)

Her tied up hair. There was something stuck in Kamito's mind.

(...This girl, as I thought, have I met her somewhere?)

Despite that it should be the first time they met, the girl somehow knew Kamito's true identity.

(However, I don't have any princess acquaintances...)

It was irritating that he seemed to recall something, but yet he couldn't recall anything.

He was staring at Fianna's face profile in that manner —

"Hey, Kamito-kun? Why have you been visually raping me since just now?"

Fianna turned towards him with a slightly troubled look.

"Ah, no... visually raping!?"

"There are certainly things like turning this fallen princess senseless, or training her like a slave. Kamito-kun, it's your free-will to make these various perverted delusions, but... well, honestly, it doesn't really feel good to be used as an adolescent boy's delusions."

"What kind of person do you think I am?"

"Ah, I would like for you to not take a princess maiden , who serves the spirit lords of the «Divine Ritual Institute», lightly. I can read your mind like picking something up."

After saying that, Fianna drew her face close and gently placed her hand onto Kamito's forehead.

He was reflexively startled by the sensation of her cool soft skin.

"...Eh? No way, a nude maid, that's shameful..."

"What's shameful is your mind!"

Kamito spontaneously shouted.

Besides, what was a nude maid? Was it a variant of the naked apron? He was a little curious.

At that moment—

"Kamito, it's about the meat's grilling adjustment though, is medium good? Or, well-done?"

"Ahh, I prefer medium... Owa!"

Upon turning around, before he knew it, Claire was standing there with a smile and a fireball floating.

"Yo...Yo...You are the wo...wo...worst, something like nude maid, you're the worst!"

Gogogogogogogo.....!

"Wait, it's a false accusation— Fianna!?"

He requested for help, but Fianna had already left the scene with an impish smile.

"Tu...turn into cinders together with your insolent delusions, you pervert!"

The fireball Claire released blew Kamito away together with the kitchen.

Part 4

Just like that, 30 minutes passed.

At the table where the judges were sitting, the food cooked by the two of them was lined up.

Est, Scarlet and Kamito, who was worn out, were sitting side by side in a line.

As the result of drawing lots, they would start eating Claire's cooking first, but—

"...Ah, I have to at least ask, what is this?"

A black lump of something was laid down on the plate before him.

Wasn't that probably the cinders thing Claire was always saying?

"If I remember, it was seafood curry... right? That was what you were making."

"...I...It looks a little overcooked."

The thing before him was completely carbonized... It was no longer about the taste.

"Ehh, is it bad if I don't eat this?

"I...It's not about appearances, what's important is the taste, right?!"

"It's awfully bitter."

Est, who sampled a mouthful, muttered that expressionlessly.

"...Est, you betrayed me."

"Isn't that obvious? Est, you've done well."

"Wh...What, Scarlet is deliciously eating it."

"That's because it's a fire spirit. It probably doesn't have something like the sense of taste."

That burnt-black lump was completely eaten by Scarlet , but he had the feeling that rather than eating something, it was incinerating waste. After it finished eating, it puffed out a small fireball.

"...Isn't Est also a spirit?! I don't think she understands the taste of a delicate cuisine."

"Use of abusive language towards a judge. Claire gets a point deduction."

Expressionlessly, Est raised up a point-deduction card.

"Guu..."

"With just a black thing, there's no need to eat it. It's my victory."

Fianna placed her hand near her mouth and a wide smile appeared on her face.

Well, there seemed to already be a winner decided, but they had to also at least eat and compare her cooking.

...*Gutsu*, *gutsu*, *gutsu*, *gutsu*, *gutsu*.[2]

They saw the cooking that was carried over—

"Th..That's..!"

Kamito was at a loss for words. Est widened her eyes unusually, Scarlet purred.

It seemed to be a boiling...stew.

It was red. It was more red compared to the time Kamito saw it a while ago. It was a stew whose ingredients could not be seen.

"Ehh, what is... this?"

"This is the Ordesia royal family's speciality, the white stew."

"How is it white!?"

At least on the surface, all he could see was one color, red. And then, there was a dreadful smell that even thrust up into his nose.

It was because of the subtle seasoning she used just now, he was certain of that.

"Wh...What is this?! There's no way anyone could eat such a thing!"

Claire pushed aside her own matters and complained. ...Well, she understood that feeling.

"Ahh, the daughter of the Elstein family is complaining without even trying it."

Fianna brushed her glossy black hair and looked down at Claire.

"This isn't fair. I doubt that's something nobles, who are exemplars to the masses, do."

"Uggg....!"

Unfairness aside, Fianna also did not eat Claire's burnt-black thing, but Claire, who blew her top, seemed to not have noticed such a thing.

Or perhaps he should put it that she was basically weak to provocation to things about noble ojou-samas. She was even weaker especially when it involved her family name and her pride as a noble.

"I...I get it, it's alright if I eat a mouthful of that, right? I'm good with spicy things, after all."

The moment Claire nodded, Fianna expressed a wicked smile.

"Hey, Claire, that's seriously dangerous—"

Without time for Kamito to stop Claire, she put the spoon into her mouth.

And then, at the next moment.

"Hyguu—!?"

.....*Patan*.

Suddenly, she collapsed onto the table.

"Cl...Claire, are you alright?!"

Kamito helped her up in a fluster, but Claire's eyes were spinning.

"...Sh...She's completely knocked out."

"It's my victory."

Fianna placed her hand at her waist and smiled.

"Err, it was that kind of match?"

"Is that not it?"

Fianna looked surprised.

Well, he felt that it was certain that they did not decide on the precise conditions to win.

"You certainly did say that you made the spirits satisfied with a ritual of the «Divine Ritual Institute», right?"

"Yeah, just by eating a mouthful, they returned to Astral Zero seemingly satisfied."

"Uh, I think that they probably did not return satisfied."

"A cooking that even destroys a spirit's sense of taste..."

Unable to prohibit the trembling.

Est leaked out such a mutter.

Part 5

(Good grief... today was a troublesome day.)

Since then, one hour had passed, Kamito was using the shower installed in the bathroom.

Because Fianna said she would shower later, Kamito ended up entering the bathroom first without any reservation.

By the way, Claire was being nursed by Scarlet in the room. She should probably be groaning on the bed currently. Kamito thought she was pitiful, but he could not even do anything.

It was already time for Est to sleep. She could not return to Astral Zero, so she needed to get a lot of sleep and she would usually sleep for about half a day.

"At any rate" —Kamito muttered while having his shower.

(Fianna Ray Ordesia... huh?)

She was a girl who was the second princess of the Ordesia Empire and the second Queen candidate next to

that Calamity Queen— Rubia Elstein. Why did she know Kamito's true identity? He did not clearly understand what her aim was for approaching him.

(It also doesn't seem like she's going to expose my true identity.)

Rather than seriously threatening him, Kamito thought that it was more like she was having fun with his reactions.

(...What on earth is going on?)

At the moment Kamito tried to stop the spirit device shower.

"Hey, Kamito-kun, I'm coming in."

Such a voice came from the direction of the dressing room.

"Hn, Ah—"

He replied.

"Wh...What!?"

Kamito turned around in a fluster.

Gararaa— The door opened.

Over there was—

"...What's the matter? You look so surprised."

A princess with a bath towel wrapped around her body.

"Wh...Wh...Wh...?"

Kamito fell into a panic state for a moment.

"Fi...Fianna, what are you doing?!"

"Uh?"

The princess slightly tilted her head and made a lovely smile.

She had a slender white nape. She had an elegant narrow waist. And then, there were her large swelling breasts. He thought that her bare white legs, seen from the slit of the bath towel, were bewitching unlike those of a 16 year old girl.

Kamito was dumbfounded—

"What, even for me, doing this thing is... embarrassing, you know?"

Her knees touched each other and she bashfully muttered.

Slowly, Fianna gently dropped her towel.

"...!?"

Kamito instantly covered his eyes with both hands—but,

"A sw...swimsuit...?"

Fianna was wearing a separate black swimsuit beneath the bath towel.

It was a water festival swimsuit, where thin veils were attached at the chest area and a pareo was wrapped around her waist.

She had both nicely tightened legs and a narrow waist that depicted her elegant curves.

Her slightly flushed body was beautiful like a descending goddess.

Kamito was charmed instantly—

"Eh, what's ... the matter?"

"Wh...What?"

"Sh...Showing my bare skin to a boy... Kamito-kun, you are the first one, you know."

Fianna's voice slightly trembled as she embarrassedly muttered.

"Wh...Why...?"

Kamito gulped.

...He did not understand the point. Why was she doing such a thing?

As if his doubt was pointed out—

"Hey, sit."

Fianna gently touched his shoulders with her hands and made Kamito sit facing the reverse direction.

It was the sensation of a girl's cool soft hands. His heartbeat accelerated right away.

"Fianna, what are you trying to—"

Fuyon.

"...!"

Suddenly, a soft sense of elasticity was pushed onto his back.

Kamito's back jumped in a startle.

Fianna coughed—

"A...a princess like me is giving your back a wash. Consider this an honor."

She began washing Kamito's back with a bubble-foaming body towel.

"Er, wait a while, why are you—"

Kamito couldn't comprehend it and was completely bewildered.

However, if he turned around, he would end up looking directly at Fianna's bewitching swimsuit appearance, so he didn't move.

"Be...Behave yourself, do you plan on making me embarrassed?"

She said that in a sulky tone and strongly scrubbed his back.

"Ho...How is it? Does it feel good?"

"Well, even if you ask something like that..."

Honestly, it felt good.

Or, with a cute girl so close like this, there's no way that it doesn't feel good.

However, he felt like he'll lose something important as a person if he said his honest thoughts.

"Yo..You're surprisingly stubborn... Hurry up and get ensnared by me!"

"Ensnared!?"

Funyu. Funyun.

He felt like he heard some sort of dangerous word just now, but his senses were taken away by the sensation of her breasts pressing on him and his mind immediately became hazy.

(This is... bad...!)

Kamito, who was brought up as an assassin since he was young at the «Instructional School», did not even do training against this kind of allurement. As, he was at the age where he did not yet require a counter-measure for such a thing, and his contracted spirit was keeping all approaching females completely away from him.

However, Kamito was now of the marriageable age of a youth.

He was already on the verge of losing his reason to the sensation of her breasts, pressing through her thin swimsuit.

"H..Hey... where are you touching!?"

"Be...Behave yourself! I'll tell your true identity to that girl."

"Th...That's right! Why do you know about Ren Ashbell—"

Kamito was about to turn around and ask her— at that moment.

Bam!— Suddenly, the bathroom door opened.

"...!?"

Over there was—

"C...Claire...?"

Claire Rouge, who was looking downwards and whose shoulder was trembling.

"Kuu, I can't believe you've already recovered..."

Fianna tightly bit her lips.

"Yo...Yo...You guys, wh...wh...wh..what are you doing?"

"You...you're mistaken, this is, err—"

Gogogogogogogogo...!

Claire's red hair bristled like flames flaring up.

Kamito resigned to being turned to cinders like usual.

"..."

Claire's movement, after raising her whip up, suddenly stopped.

In her ruby pupils, flames were burning up, as she was sternly glaring at Fianna.

Fianna expressed a composed expression. Pitoo— she stuck her breasts onto Kamito's back.

"Fianna!? Wh...why are you doing something like adding fuel to—"

Kamito tried to separate his body in a fluster, but his arms were tightly held.

"I'm now washing Kamito-kun's back. Could you please not bother us?"

"Kuu, yo...you guys..."

(Ah... I'm so dead.)

Kamito strangely closed his eyes with a calm mood.

However, the move Claire took next was completely unexpected.

It wasn't the usual where she blew Kamito away with her Flame Tongue—

"I...I'll... also wash your back."

"Eh?" "Huh?"

She sternly glared at the two of them who were dumbfounded— and informed them.

"I mean I'm also entering the bath!"

Part 6

Fianna Ray Ordesia
フィアナ・レイ・オルデシア

Claire Rouge
クレア・ルージュ

「ど、どうなのカミト？　気持ちいい？」
「あら、私のほうが気持ちいいわよね？」
（ま、まて、これは……どんな状況だ!?）

"Ho...How is it, Kamito? Does it feel good?"

"Ah, I'm the one who's making you feel good, right?"

(Wa...Wait, what... kind of situation is this!?)

Three minutes later, Kamito's head was completely in a panic.

...He wondered if he was having a nasty nightmare. However, this sensation he felt on his back was real.

In a bathroom for 1 person to use, he ended up being covered in bubble-foam with two beautiful girls for some reason.

Furthermore, Claire wasn't even wearing a swimsuit. Her naked body was just wreathed around by a bath towel.

Her vivid crimson red hair looked pretty on her fine milky-white skin.

She had a petite build and slender proportions.

That lovely fairy-like body of hers was more than charming enough, even if she was lacking breasts.

There were red belt marks on her thigh seen through the slit of her towel. Claire had her animal-training leather whip wreathed around her thigh. Those marks were strangely captivating.

Kamito eagerly tried to not look at the two of them, but because the room was small after all, he would end up closely stuck to their skin with just a slight movement. That sensation ended up further boosting his imagination.

"Kyaa...hey, what are you touching, idiot!"

"Ah, if you move like that, you'll rub my front...Hyauu ."

It was that situation just by twisting his body a little due to the ticklishness.

(Give me a break...)

If boys of about the same age heard this, they might think that it's the Shangri-La of dreams, but, as for

Kamito, he felt like it was as if he was sitting on a bed of nails.

...Why was this happening, he did not understand the point.

It was probably because Claire had an opposing heart towards Fianna that she ended up blurting out such a thing, and it became that she couldn't back out, but— as for Kamito, who was dragged into this, this was intolerable.

He should be getting out from here as quickly as possible, but if he moved even a little, he would end up directly coming in contact with their skin, so even if he planned to get out, he couldn't get out.

"Hey, I'm the one who's making you feel good, right? Say that it feels good!"

"Ouchhh, you're peeling off the skin on my back."

"Eh, it hurts so much? ... Wow, your back is full of injuries."

"Ah, that's because I've always been hurt by a certain somebody."

"I...I'm sorry..."

Kamito groaned with a deadpan look and Claire awkwardly apologized.

"—No, I'm joking. Those are old wounds from the past ."

The injuries on his back were gotten from the time when he called himself Strongest Blade Dancer before.

Ren Ashbell

"...Hn? Fianna, what are you looking at?"

—Claire frowned and looked at Fianna.

"I...it's nothing."

"What's the matter with my spirit seal?"

Fianna had been intermittently gazing at Claire's spirit seal on her right hand since a while ago.

"Di...didn't I say that it's nothing!"

Fianna let out a flustered voice unlike her usual self and quickly averted her eyes.

Claire stared at her in such a state, seemingly puzzled —

"...Your spirit seal is at such a place. How unusual."

She had gotten a quick look at a part of her spirit seal at Fianna's cleavage, who was wearing a swimsuit.

"If I recall, you're a holy spirit user?"

"Yea... that's right."

Fianna, who answered her, had a slightly stiff expression.

"What kind of spirit is yours, summon it and show it to us."

Kamito also had an interest in that. As teammates participating in the same quest, they should at least have a grasp of the type of spirits being used. That was also, without fail, the duty of being in the team.

However, Fianna turned away with a seemingly displeased look for some reason.

"I'll show it to you when necessary. An elementalist doesn't thoughtlessly summon her contracted spirit."

Certainly, there were also elementalists with that kind of thinking among the academy students.

As there was the possibility that their spirits would be seen through by rivals from their appearances to their attributes, weaknesses and so on.

On the other hand—

"If you don't make communications with your contracted spirit daily, mutual trust can't be created."

There were also people who thought like Claire and they were the majority in the academy.

As either opinions also have a reason, either side couldn't be unconditionally said to be correct, but—

For some reason, those words of Claire seemed to have gotten on Fianna's nerves.

"...You won't understand. Claire Rouge."

"...? Hey, what do you mean by that—"

"I'm getting out already."

Fianna muttered with an ice-like voice and quickly stood up.

—At that moment.

He heard the faint sound of weapons from afar.

It was something normal humans would fail to hear, the sound of metal clashing.

However, Kamito, who once received training at the « Instructional School», certainly heard it.

"Kamito, what's the matter?"

"There's a battle occurring within the academy—"

It might be a fellow academy student's duel. No, if that was the case, the Sylphid Knights should have immediately stopped it.

"I have a bad premonition."

That was a pure uneasiness— to be honest. His intuition as an elementalist, which was honed as he went through countless battles— that was the only one he wanted to believe that did not dull as he expected.

(There's no doubt, there's a terrible fellow—)

He dashed out of the bathroom, nimbly put on his uniform, and then Est turned up, rubbing her eyelids and looking sleepy, in her pajamas. It seemed that this sword spirit felt an unusual phenomenon.

"Kamito, there's something not good outside."

"Ahh, sorry for waking you up, Est."

"No, Kamito. I'm your sword."

Kamito grasped Est's small hand and the girl's body turned into particles of light in a moment.

At the next moment, Kamito's hand was gripping the elemental waffe— Terminus Est.

He felt that her sword body was smaller and her radiance was also duller compared to usual, but because she had just woken up, it couldn't be helped.

Kamito jumped out from the room's window.

"Wa...Wait up... ahh, come on! Come, Scarlet!"

Claire called Scarlet and jumped out chasing Kamito.

Chapter 5: The One Who Will Succeed the Demon King

Part 1

"What on earth is this—"

Clad in the devastating winds of the demon wind spirit, Ellis, who appeared gallantly, was speechless.

There was an unbelievable scene spread out before her eyes.

The knights of the Sylphid Knights, which maintained the public order of the academy, were collapsed on the ground in heaps.

Only academy students with excellent results could enroll into the Sylphid Knights. That was—

(Don't tell me, they were defeated by just one intruder!?)

In the middle of the darkness, where there was a drizzle.

A small figure, who put on an overcoat with a hood, was standing in the middle of the collapsed girls.

"Was it you, bastard? The one that did this!"

Ellis asked a direct question. Her hand was already armed with the elemental waffe —«Ray Hawk».

It was just about 30 minutes ago that she heard the report that an intruder had appeared in the academy and plundered the classified materials of the seal specification from the library. Ellis immediately put out a pursuit order to a platoon of the Knights, and while she used her wind spirit to give instructions to every platoon, she was pursuing the intruder by herself.

And then, upon travelling at high speed to the place where she lost contact with them, they were in that state.

The elementalist before her eyes kept quiet. Just a scorning presence was transmitted.

"—I see, in that case, I'll make you talk whether you like it or not."

The «Ray Hawk», which Ellis took a stance with, filled with wind thunderously.

Just by looking, the figure of a contracted spirit could not be found in that person's surroundings. It seemed like that person wasn't holding an elemental waffe either.

However, the elementalist, before her eyes, had already defeated 5 girls from the Knights.

(Is she using a type of spirit that possesses the flesh?)

The opponent's identity was completely unknown. Or, far from not finding the figure of a contracted spirit, was the opponent not an elementalist?—No, that can't be it. For example, even if one launched a surprise attack, something like a person, who wasn't even an elementalist , to defeat five Knights members alone was impossible.

(In that case, I'll have to ascertain it with these eyes of mine—!)

Ellis took a stance with Ray Hawk and attacked like a gale.

The opponent finally reacted. A muffled voice was heard from under the hood—

"—Manifest, Fanged Wolf Spirit."
Wolf Fang

At that moment, a pattern of lines appeared on the ground, and a spirit with the appearance of a ferocious wolf was summoned.

"That's your spirit, huh? However, it isn't a match for my demon wind spirit!"

As she ran, Ellis wielded her lance perfectly horizontal.

The lump of violent winds she released mowed down the roadside trees while rushing toward Wolf Fang.

Ellis accelerated like she was being sucked in by her self-made wind vortex, ignoring the stranded Wolf Fang, and aimed directly for the elementalist.

Tan!—She kicked the ground. Her academy skirt waved about and Ellis had jumped.

She was about to do her specialty, a nose-dive attack from the sky. It was a technique that had defeated all the upperclassmen during the practice matches.

With the contracted spirit stranded, the elementalist, who became defenseless, looked up.

And then, **the person faced Ellis and turned her palm towards her**.

"What!?"

"—Manifest, Ripping Blast Gear Thunder Spirit!"

At that moment, a bluish-white lightning, released from his palm, was fired at Ellis.

Ellis, who had not been expecting anything like an attack coming towards her, received a direct attack and was blown away without even being able to dodge in mid-air.

Without delay, Wolf Fang rushed in and attacked. It pushed down on Ellis, who was thrown onto the ground, and tried to bite down on her windpipe. On the verge of that—

Hyuu! She thought she heard a sound that ripped apart the air, then, Wolf Fang's body was severed into four parts in an instant, burning up into ashes.

"...!?"

Eliis raised her face and traced the crimson remains that ripped apart the night sky with her eyes—

"You owe me one, Ellis Fahrengart."

Raven Class's Claire Rouge descended with her Flame tongue in her hand.

And then—

"Ellis, are you alright?!"

Armed with a silver sword, Kazehaya Kamito came running.

Part 2

Kamito rushed over to Ellis's side, who had already fallen.

Armed with the elemental waffe—Terminus Est, he stood with his arms apart as if protecting her.

Claire was a short distance away and Fianna also came running later, out of breath.

"Ellis, are you alright?"

"...I-It isn't a big deal."

Kamito lifted Ellis up by her shoulder and she turned red and shifted her face away.

"What on earth happened? Who is that person?"

"It is nothing concerning you guys. This has been entrusted to the Knights, so step back."

"That won't do. We are elementalists. And even if there weren't the Knights, we have the obligation to fight to protect the academy."

"It's like that. Besides—"

Staring directly at Ellis's face, Kamito said.

"Our precious comrade was hurt; do you think we could stay silent?"

"Kamito..."

Ellis's face turned bright red and she tightly pressed down on her chest.

—At that moment.

"Hey, I can't believe you came. Kazehaya Kamito."

The elementalist before his eyes raised his voice. For some reason, it was an irritating voice.

"...Who are you? Why do you know my name?"

"Your name is famous, you know. **You're the same as me, a male elementalist**."

"What!?"

The elementalist before his eyes slowly took off his overcoat with a hood.

At that moment, all of them at that place gulped.

Coming to sight from under the overcoat was—

His dark brown skin, which had tattoos applied all over his body; with glaring and shining red eyes, it was – a boy.

"Such a thing... don't tell me, there are male elementalists other than Kamito!?"

Claire raised a surprised voice.

It wasn't— a girl disguised as a boy.

Not just his voice and face, no matter how one looked at that physique, it was that of a male.

(This guy, who on earth... No, leaving that aside now –)

Before Kamito's eyes, the injured Knight girls had collapsed.

"—Was this done by you?"

"Yeah. However, I didn't kill them. That lot was raised in a lenient miniature garden and isn't worth killing."

"What did you say!?"

"Calm down, Ellis, it's just a cheap provocation."

Ellis grinded her teeth and whispered near Kamito's ear.

"Be careful, Kazehaya Kamito. He has a double contract with spirits."

"A double contract?"

A double contract was, in other words, contracts with two spirits at the same time.

By using several spirits, one could compensate for the weakness of his battle style.

However, exchanging contracts with several spirits would only have demerits in most cases.

The fellow contracted spirits caused interference, thus it became impossible to manifest their original powers.

Kamito was certainly in that situation right now. As the contract with the darkness spirit was not broken, it ended up shutting out Est's power, who was originally an even more powerful spirit.

"...A male spirit contracter. In addition, a double contractor?"

"Yeah, the spirits he's using are close-combat type Wolf Fang and far-range attack Blast Gear."

Ellis nodded.

"Hey, could you overlook this for today? I don't have the mood to fight you now."

"What was that?"

Kamito frowned at the boy, who waved his hand flutteringly like he was making fun of him.

"As long as I obtain this, that's fine."

The boy took out a small black lithograph from his chest pocket to show them.

"What is that?"

"The classified materials of the seal specification that I stole from the academy library. By using a special spirit device, it is filled with high density information that can be deciphered."

While arming herself with her demon lance of wind, Ellis muttered.

"The classified materials of the seal specification? Why did you steal such –"

At that moment, a leather whip flew aimed at the boy's hand.

It was Claire's surprise attack. Had it been foreseen? The boy easily dodged the whip—

"—Kamito, Ellis!"

"Ahh!"

Before Claire shouted, the both of them were moving.

"Tch, every one of them are one stupid lot—"

"You bastard—"

Feeling that her comrades of the Knights were insulted , Ellis was enraged.

She swung her Ray Hawk perfectly horizontally – the wind blades, dancing boisterously, severed the roadside trees.

"Huh, another charge? You have no ingenuity!"

As he dodged the raging wind blades, the boy jumped.

He had a superhuman jumping power. In a manner of passing each other with movements like those of a shadow, he drove a counter punch into Ellis's stomach, who came charging.

"Guu—"

"Ellis!"

Kamito shouted.

(With just one strike to that Ellis...)

The boy, who made Ellis faint, had already jumped into the darkness.

"Don't escape!"

Claire immediately let loose her Flame Tongue. Beautifully drawing an arc, the red hot killing brandish stood out vividly in the black night.

A sculpture, modeled after the appearance of the spirit lord, was severed in an instant and was blasted with a flashy sound.

Kamito took a stance with Terminus Est and jumped into the rising cloud of dust.

The attack just now shouldn't have made a direct hit. He searched for the enemy's figure by his presence—

At that moment, bloodlust was felt from behind.

Kamito immediately jumped sideways. The killing flash of a dagger mowed down at the place where his head was a moment ago.

The boy stepped in without a sound. He didn't give him a chance to get some distance between them.

There were no wasted movements— It was like those movements from Silent Killing.

(This guy – he's a professional assassin!?)

Kamito barely stopped the blow of the drawn sword, flashing in the darkness, with his sword.

At that moment, there was a strong impact to his stomach. A strong punch was thrown and Kamito's stance crumbled. An assassin's dagger swooped over – but Kamito knocked off the dagger with the bottom of his fist and rolled on the ground with the force, getting some distance.

"Hey, aren't you pretty good, as expected of the strongest blade dancer."

"What!?"

Kamito's eyes widened in surprise.

(This guy, does he know my true identity!?)

In that moment's opening, when his consciousness went astray, the boy smiled and came jumping once again.

There were no weapons in his hands. Kamito was armed with Terminus Est—

"—Manifest, Sword Spirit (Falchion)!"

"Wha!?"

A violent firework exploded. Terminus Est, which was horizontally mowed down on, was repelled.

What the boy was holding in his hand was a large blue shining sword.

It wasn't an ordinary sword— It was an elemental waffe of a sword spirit.

"His third contracted spirit!?"

He had crossed swords several times with elementalists that used two spirits at the same time.

However, he had not heard of anything like an elementalist using a third or more spirits.

"This isn't something to be that surprised about. The Demon King Solomon was said to have used seventy-two spirits, you know."

"Don't mess around... that's just a legend—"

"What if the existence of that legend was now right before your eyes?"

The boy warped his lips into a smile.

"I am Jio Inzagi – **The one who will succeed the Demon King**."

"Kamito, get away!"

At that moment, countless fireballs were released from behind. It was Claire's spirit magic.

Kamito immediately reacted and jumped.

It was a downpour of fireballs. However, the boy –Jio Inzagi held out his hand with a calm composure.

"—Manifest, Wind (Aerial) Spirit!"

A lump of compressed wind was released radically.

The violent whirling wind erased the fireballs and blew away the surrounding rubble together with Kamito.

(Aerial...His fourth spirit!?)

Jio's shadow appeared right above Kamito, who looked surprised.

At the same time as releasing Aerial, he had used that force and jumped.

The edge of the sword spirit in his hand shone silver.

"Die—Strongest Blade Dancer."

Ren Ashbell

"...!?"

Towards Kamito's heart, the tip of a shining sword approached—

At that moment, a pebble came flying from the side.

"Tch—"

Jio repelled that off reflexively, and at that moment—

A flash like broad daylight filled his field of vision.

Jio, whose eyes were disoriented, lost his sword and it pierced the ground.

Kamito quickly regained his stance—

Katsun! –There was a dry sound. A smashed transparent stone fell at Kamito's feet.

(...This is a spirit crystal?)

Kamito was taken aback and turned around.

Over there—

"Hey, I wonder, could you please not forget about me?
"

Fianna was standing with her hands at her waist.

Part 3

He might have noticed that her voice was trembling.

And yet, Fianna stoutheartedly glared at the enemy before her – Jio Inzagi.

There were 3 spirit crystals held in her hand. Every piece had a flash spirit sealed in it.

The appearance definitely looked flashy, but its attack power was almost nonexistent; it was only usable as a distraction at best.

It was possible to take him by surprise just now, but he was probably not an opponent who would fall for such a childish trick again.

Jio Inzagi slowly turned towards Fianna.

Being watched by his glaring and shining red eyes, Fianna's shoulders trembled.

"Hey, were you the one who hindered me?"

"He is mine. Get your hands off him."

"I see—"

Jio faced her directly and held out his hand.

Shining Ray
"—Manifest, Demon Light Spirit"

A spear of ominous light was born from that hand – he had decided to aim at Fianna's heart.

"Ah—"

Fianna – couldn't even move.

Like a prey glared at by a predator.

The spirit crystals held in her palms fell out. Her fingertips were trembling due to the fear.

"No, it's the same as that day—"

She had a flashback.

Four years ago, when she stood before **her**, that day.

That day when she tasted the fear of hopelessness, when Fianna's heart had broken.

She had planned on firmly opposing him and drawing out her courage, but her body's trembling wouldn't stop.

"Then, die—"

Jio threw the light spear.

"Fianna!"

Claire launched her Flame Tongue, but it wouldn't make it in time with that distance.

Fianna closed her eyes. A moment later, she resigned herself to her coming death.

However—

"...Eh?"

The pain of her heart being pierced that should have been there wasn't there.

When she opened her eyes—

"Kamito-kun?"

Kamito was before her eyes with his arms opened, and he had stopped the light spear with his left hand.

Red blood trickled down from his pierced palm.

"Whoa, I've misjudged you. You covered for such a useless person."

"Shut up... Fianna is our comrade."

Kamito groaned in order to suppress the pain, and genuflected on that spot.

"That's fine, if you want to die so much, then I'll immediately kill—"

"I won't let you, that guy is my slave!"

At that moment, the Flame Tongue released by Claire attacked Jio.

The crimson flames licked the ground. Jio clicked his tongue and jumped.

—At that moment, the sound of clattering armors and helmets was heard in the distance.

It seemed that having heard the sound of a battle, a reinforcement of a large group of Knights had come.

"Tch, in this situation, I'll pardon you. I've already obtained the target materials."

"You won't escape!"

"Claire, don't chase him too far!"

Kamito stopped Claire, who was about to pursue him.

"...Kamito, is your injury alright?"

"Ahh, it isn't a big ... Ouch!"

"Id-Idiot, don't overdo it!"

Claire supported Kamito, who was struggling with the pain, by his back.

"A male elementalist the same as you... that guy, who on earth is he?"

"Yeah...Fianna?"

Kamito noticed something and turned around.

The backlash of the tension being resolved had caused Fianna to collapse at that spot suddenly like a thread snapping.

Chapter 6: The Morning of the Departure

Part 1

—Four years ago, it was the day when the still young girl's heart was completely broken.

Flames were rising one by one all over the shrine.

The flames emitted black smoke and thunderously blazed. There were the screams of the disordered guards.

On that day, at the shrine, where the Elemental Lord was worshipped, a major event that shook the empire was occurring.

The Fire Queen suddenly flew a banner of revolt and stole the Strongest Flame Spirit Laevatein from the shrine.

The likes of the Empire's Spirit Knights couldn't even prove to be her opponent. The raging Laevatein wielded a gigantic flaming demon sword and was simply mowing down the spirits blocking its way.

Inside the whirling flames and black smoke, a girl was running alone.

The «Divine Ritual Institute»'s princess maidens, who were packed into the bedrooms, were already escaping towards the outside.

However, the girl's running wasn't to escape.

It was to stop her.

Her senior maiden—Rubia Elstein, who she adored like an elder sister and had admired from her heart.

(It has to be some sort of mistake. Rubia-sama wouldn't do—)

The girl was out of breath and finally reached the entrance of the shrine.

The fire Queen was— over there.

Her red hair fluttered in the surging violent winds and in that hand of hers was a sword of blazing scarlet flames .

In the dead of night, her face, shined upon by the light of the flames, was no less than extremely beautiful.

"Rubia-sama."

The girl gulped.

She came all the way to stop her and yet—

Before that oh-so terrible blood lust, simply standing took all she had.

However, she strained her voice bravely.

She had to stop her. That was the duty of one born into the royal family.

"Do not— get in my way."

The Fire Queen warned with an emotionless voice.

Her ruby pupils, carrying red hot flames, looked down on the girl before her like shooting through her.

"No, Rubia-sama. There's no way I will allow you to pass through here."

Glaring firmly back at those eyes, the girl recited the Spirit language summoning.

"—Thou, servant of the king of the child of man, knight and master swordsman!"

"—By the contract of the old blood, become the sword that protects me, come forth and do my bidding!"

The girl's contracted spirit was a high ranking holy spirit, which had served the Ordesia royal family for generations.

Even if she couldn't win, she should be able to roughly stall for some time—

—That was what she thought.

However.

"I said don't get in my way."

At that moment, the Fire Queen swung the sword of scarlet flames held in her hand.

In just a moment. A red killing-flash occurred, the summoned holy spirit was wrapped in a red hot conflagration and vanished.

"Wh...at..."

Thump. The girl collapsed on her knees at that spot.

It was painful to breathe. Her throat had a cramp and she couldn't even gasp.

The cause was the contracted spirit she had put perfect trust in.

The strongest knight, who always protected her since she was young, vanished too quickly.

"N-No, help me please..."

The hopeless fear crushed the heart of the girl, who was overflowing with confidence, into small pieces.

Throwing off all her pride as a royalty, the girl just shed tears and begged.

The one who was there was neither the empire's second princess, nor the elite princess maiden of the « Divine Ritual Institute».

It was merely a powerless girl.

The Fire Queen bent over her waist gently. The girl's whole body trembled with just that.

"Fianna Ray Ordesia— Never appear before me again."

She whispered that close to her ears, and then went on, disappearing into the middle of the blazing flames.

Part 2

"...!?"

Fianna jumped up from the bed.

Her rough breathing would not settle. Unpleasant perspiration was causing her undergarments to cling closely to her skin.

"A dream..."

After muttering and regulating her breathing, she tightly grabbed the bed sheet.

It was Claire's room in the Raven Class' dormitory. The morning sunlight was shining in from the window.

It seemed that she had slept with her uniform on. It couldn't be said that it was comfortable enough to sleep

in, but the uniform of the «Divine Ritual Institute», which incorporated the holy attribute, had the effect of fatigue recovery.

(My secret, looks like it hasn't been exposed...)

Slightly easing open her chest area, Fianna breathed a sigh of relief.

—And then, she recalled. It was about yesterday night.

(If he hadn't protected me at that moment, right now I would have been—)

She bit her lips and put strength into her hand grabbing the sheet.

(...It's the same as that day. In the end, I couldn't do anything.)

At that moment, the room's door suddenly opened—

"Fianna... you've awoken?!"

"Kyaa!?"

Fianna reflexively screamed and quickly concealed her exposed bosom.

"M-My bad!"

Flustered, Kamito averted his eyes.

"W-Why did you suddenly enter..."

"Sorry... I had the same experience with waking an ojou-sama, who always oversleeps."

As Kamito scratched his head, he apologized. His face was spread with the color of weariness.

"Your hand's injury, is it alright?"

"Ah, it's no big deal. Claire had already called for the medical team after all."

With a flutter, Kamito waved his left hand, that had been pierced by the spirit, to show her.

It certainly looked like his wound had been healed, but that expression of his looked like he was still in pain and enduring it.

"I'm sorry, it's because of me. Because I meddled unnecessarily."

"No, Fianna, if you hadn't used the spirit crystal at that time, I'd have been done for. Thank you for saving me. About the spirit crystal of releasing, isn't it unreasonably high priced?"

"I-It's nothing special, who do you think I am?"

"I see...you are the former royal princess."

As Kamito wryly smiled, he sat beside the bed.

(...N-No way, why is my face so hot, I wonder.)

Fianna's heart was racing.

(I'm just **trying to use him and yet**.)

For her face to not be seen directly for some reason, Fianna drew her hands near to her knees and looked down.

"About yesterday's intruder, it seems the Sylphid Knights are in the middle of investigating. The teachers also seem to be moving in a fluster, however, the plan is for us to go investigate Mine Town as planned."

Kamito cut his sentence there—

"That's—it. Before we go for the quest, I have to talk to you."

"Isn't it still early to propose?"

"...Don't make fun of me. You know it, right? About that matter."

Kamito said with a frowning tone, and *kata*, a small sound was heard outside.

Fianna smirked. It was the same as a girl's face when thinking of messing around.

Upon brushing her glamorous black hair, she gently drew her lips close to Kamito's ear—

"I understand. With just the two of us, at a place where Claire isn't around, you have something important to talk about."

"Hn? Ah, that is so, but..."

It was a manner of speech that had something unclear — Kamito frowned and at that moment...

Bam— The room's door suddenly opened.

"Hey, Kamito, with just the two of you, at a place where I'm not around, what important thing do you have to talk about?"

Gogogogogogogogo...!

"Claire!? W-Wait, you misunderstood, the words just now were by no means a conversation like that—"

"Scarlet!"

When Claire called out its name, a red-hot hellcat appeared from an empty space.

"Y-Y-You have two choices... Roasted or smoked?!"

"—Fianna, let's run away!"

"Eh...Kyaa!"

Kamito gently carried Fianna, kicked open the room's window and jumped.

"Ah, y-you got away, wait up!"

Part 3

The academy courtyard was hazy with the morning mist.

Rinslet Laurenfrost took her maid and wolf for a morning walk.

"Carol, let's have breakfast at the dining hall?"

"Yes, milady."

Carol nodded, seemingly happy. The white wolf walking beside her also howled.

Contrary to its ferocious-looking appearance, this wolf surprisingly made round and cute eyes. It was the high-ranked demon ice spirit «Fenrir», which had served the Laurenfrost family for generations.

Walking a contracted spirit wasn't something that unusual.

The spirits particularly like walking in the forest. The « Spirit Forest» surrounding the academy was an environment of exceedingly good feeling to the spirits that manifested in this world.

Girls from the Knights were running in a fluster in the academy corridors surrounding the courtyard.

"What? It's been noisy since morning."

"It seems that a thief broke into the academy last night, milady."

"To creep into this academy, that's a brave thief— Ah?"

Frowning suddenly, Rinslet raised her voice.

Kamito was walking towards the Spirit Forest from the academy building.

Kamito was leading a shockingly pretty girl.

"Ah, it's Kamito-sama. The girl beside him is, if I'm not mistaken, the newly admitted student, Fianna-san?"

"..."

Rinslet pouted her lips, seemingly sullen.

"I wonder why, my chest is somewhat surging with anger."

"Ah, milady, do you dislike Kamito-sama?"

"Yes, I hate him! That distinction-lacking person!"

"However, milady, you seem pretty concerned about Kamito-sama."

"I-I just want to steal Claire Rouge's slave!"

Rinslet's face turned red and she turned away.

—And then, over there, she spotted the appearance of another acquaintance and frowned.

Just right at that moment, Claire came out from the Raven Class dormitory's outer gate.

She somewhat looked strange and was tottering with an unusually depressed expression.

Even her prided red twintail was now dejectedly dangling.

"What on earth happened?"

Rinslet muttered, seemingly worried.

(...She may be my rival, but as expected I cannot abandon her.)

Even if they always quarrel, she was worried about her childhood friend one way or another.

Leaving behind Carol and Fenrir at that spot, Rinslet quietly approached from behind.

"W-Why he— are such big breasts good? Those lumps of fat..."

"What's with breasts, Claire Rouge?"

"...! Ri-Rinslet!?"

Claire was taken aback and screamed.

"Aren't your breasts being deplorable a usual thing?"

"S-Shut up... Well, that's enough. Besides that, have you seen Kamito?"

"Kamito-san, I happened to see him some time ago. He was walking with a girl, just the two of them."

"W-What was that?!"

"They went towards the forest direction. If you run after them, you can still make it."

Claire... groaned.

"I-I don't care about such a guy! I hope he dies by suffocation while being buried in breasts!"

"Hey, Claire, what on earth happened?"

Rinslet inquired, seemingly puzzled.

Claire tightly bit her lips—

"Rinslet, hide your shame and listen... W-Why are my breasts small?"

Rinslet kindly smiled at Claire, whose face bashfully reddened.

"You are not at all at fault. It's just that your deplorable breasts are at fault. Besides, so-called maniac men who like those also exist in society."

"Rinslet, didn't you say something earth-shatteringly rude under the pretense of comforting me?"

"It was just your imagination."

Rinslet nonchalantly said.

"It'd be fine if I could share and give my breast to you, however..."

She muttered— suddenly, Rinslet recalled an article that she read from some magazine.

"Claire, I remembered a method to enlarge your breasts."

"Eh?"

Claire gazed at Rinslet with eyes full of anticipation for a moment.

...However, she instantly shook her head.

"...L-Lies, there's no way such a method exists. I heard a rumor that the legendary large breast spirit had been seen in the «Spirit Forest» in the older days and went hunting, but even that was a false rumor."

"Eh, y-you were doing such a shameful thing?"

Rinslet was, as expected, a little drawn back.

"S-Shut up... That's enough. I'll hear you out about that method."

"Ahem." Claire coughed and said.

She took an attitude as if she didn't seem interested, but her keen interest had been found out.

Hmm. Rinslet placed her hand at her chin.

(...This is perhaps something I can use as a trade.)

It seemed that Claire's worries were not something very serious.

If that's the case, she felt like it was a waste to just give the information to her rival.

(...That reminds me, Claire's team entered into an S rank quest.)

Rinselt recalled about the thing she casually heard from Carol yesterday.

"It's alright even if I tell you. However, it is just difficult to do it for free."

"W-What?"

"I also want to have the privilege of joining Team Scarlet's current quest."

"...Huh? Why are you coming along?!"

"It is unfair that only you guys get to go on a trip. Besides, it will be troubling for my manservant to be tamed as you please at a place where my eyes can't reach. "

"It isn't a trip; it's a quest. To begin with, Kamito isn't your manservant."

Claire bluntly shook her head. It was natural. If the number of people participating in the quest increased, then the ranking points given per person would also end up decreasing after all.

"I see, in that case, it's regretful, but I am unable to tell you the method to enlarge your breasts."

"Guu..."

Claire, seemingly vexed, gritted her teeth.

For a few seconds, she sternly glared at Rinslet—

"...I-I get it."

Eventually, she sighed as she gave up.

"You may come along. However, forming a team with you is something temporary."

"Th-That's obvious! Who would join a team like yours?!"

Part 4

During that time, Kamito and Fianna had gone deep into the «Spirit Forest».

At night, it was a forest of darkness with the squirming of nasty spirits, but during the day, it gave off the same feeling as a sacred shrine. Such was the «Spirit Forest»: a place with a two-faced nature.

(That reminds me, I met Claire here...)

...That was, in many ways, the worst kind of meeting, though.

"To walk in the middle of the trees with just the two of us, it's just like a date."

"This isn't a place suited for a date. There are spirits that the eyes can't see drifting all over the place."

"It's fine. If I had to say so, then I'm more the type that gets fired up being seen."

"...Wh... Pr-Princesses don't say such a thing!"

"It's a joke. What are you getting red for?"

While having such a conversation, the two of them emerged into a clearing in the middle of the forest.

He didn't have to worry about anyone hearing about their chat.

"Well then, I have one thing I want to ask—"

"My underwear's color is black."

"Don't go ahead and answer. That's not it, I don't plan to ask such a question."

Kamito retorted with deadpan eyes. It was not good for him to be dragged into the princess's pace.

"Ahem", he coughed and gazed straight into Fianna's eyes—

"Why do you know my true identity?"

"..."

There were a few seconds of silence.

And then, she calmly sighed.

The color of disappointment that she couldn't conceal surfaced on her face.

"...Hey, are you really unable to remember?"

"Sorry, but I don't have a princess acquaintance."

Fianna sighed again at Kamito's reply.

She puffed her cheeks, rather than being shocked, he felt like she was angry.

"Hint one, do you remember anything looking at this forest?"

"The forest?"

"Yes, «Astral Zero's» forest."

Astral Zero... There was something stuck in Kamito's mind.

"Hint two, the «Blade Dance»"

"Blade Dance, you mean the one three years ago? ... Don't tell me, you're an opponent from one of the blade dances!?"

"Hint three, hair style!"

Shouting in an irritated voice, Fianna tied up her hair with both hands.

She wore her glamorous black hair on both sides, that face—

"Ah!"

Kamito spontaneously raised his voice.

"...I-I remember!"

Three years ago, she was the girl he saved when she was being attacked by a spirit in the Astral Zero forest.

Certainly, Kamito got seen when he wasn't wearing his female clothing at that time.

"The girl from that day was you, Fianna!"

"...Yes, jeez."

Fianna pouted her lips as though she was peevish.

"Err, but, your atmosphere is greatly different..."

Kamito spoke ambiguously. It was not that he remembered it that vividly, but at least she wasn't such a grown-up girl.

"What, Kamito-kun, you too have changed pretty much."

"Various things happened."

Kamito awkwardly averted his eyes.

His line of sight unconsciously fixed on his left hand covered by leather glove.

—Three years ago was when just about everything changed.

After all, it was that day he lost her, reaching his hand out to the «Wish» that should have never been wished for.

"Despite promising to meet again, despite me waiting all this time. You disappeared."

"...Sorry."

Kamito honestly apologized.

Fianna placed her hands on her waist, and sighed in disappointment.

"It's fine, I'll forgive you. I'm offended that you completely forgot about me, but well, that's it. To you, it was only one girl you saved by chance."

"But hey—", she desolately muttered.

Suddenly, she pushed her soft fingertip gently onto Kamito's lips.

"You're really my first love."

"Wh...!?"

"It's a joke."

"...Wh-Why you."

Kamito glared with a deadpan look and Fianna giggled.

"I see, you're the girl from that time..."

However, even if—

Why on earth did she come approaching Kamito? That reason was not clear.

"Fianna, why did you come to this academy?"

"Of course, it's to kiss my beloved Kamito-kun."

"...Don't you feel embarrassed saying that?"

"Y-Yes...that just now was a little embarrassing."

Fianna turned red and looked downwards. ...Well, she'll do it.

"I came here because I heard about Kamito-kun."

"About me?"

"Yeah, a few days ago, I heard a rumor from my castle-serving butler. That there was a male elementalist,

who defeated a rampaging militarized spirit. After investigating, that name—"

"Was my name, the one, who disappeared three years ago."

"That's it. Although, I knew intuitively just from the male elementalist part."

"Then, why did you come to meet me?"

"Th-That's to kiss with Kamito-kun—"

"No, that's enough."

Kamito interrupted and Fianna was a little sullen as she kept silent.

And then, she calmly opened her mouth.

"I thought of threatening you with the secret of your past and forcibly getting to join your team."

"What do you mean?"

Ren Ashbell

"If I was in the same team as Strongest Blade Dancer, the strongest blade dancer, I thought that I could win this time's Blade Dance."

"...I see. That means that those unnatural seductive methods were also part of your plan?"

"Err... I-I got exposed."

"Your acting was too unnatural. Well, I think you did your best."

At any rate, she was a real princess and through rigid ways, she was a famous «Divine Ritual Institute» princess maiden. In relation to such a field, in a certain way, she was a girl more innocent than this academy's ojou-samas.

"However, don't misunderstand! D-Doing such a thing is something I've only done to you, Kamito-kun!"

"No, such a follow-up is troubling..."

Kamito moaned with a deadpan look and sighed.

"However, why do you plan on entering the «Blade Dance»?"

"That's..."

Fianna made a perplexed-like expression—

"Isn't it obvious? If I win the Blade Dance, I'll have all the status and honor I desire. Everyone, who was ridiculing me —The Lost Queen, useless princess— will have to recognize me."

"...I see."

—That was a lie. Kamito had a hunch. That was not the true reason.

Her cold pupils were similar to Claire's, carrying a strong will towards their goal.

With such a reason, she shouldn't be able to have such eyes.

"Hey, Kamito-kun. You aren't angry?"

"Hn, why?"

"After all, I'm trying to use you."

Kamito shrugged his shoulders at the princess, who became serious at a strange time.

"It's nothing, Greyworth always uses me. On top of that, Claire gives me the slave treatment. Even if such people increase by one or two, it makes no difference."

Ren Ashbell

"It seems even that Strongest Blade Dancer has it hard in various things."

Fianna bitterly smiled, at that moment—

"You guys, what are you doing there?!"

The thicket rustled and a cold voice resounded.

He turned around and a girl, whose face he recognized , appeared from the other side of the thicket.

"Ellis?"

"...Oh, it's Kamito."

Ellis took a breath of relief and sheathed her sword. Then, she pushed through the thicket and walked towards his direction.

Immediately from behind, Rakka and Reishia from the Knights appeared.

"Ellis, what's the matter? Why are you in the middle of the forest?"

"Those are our words. Because of yesterday's intruder, the Knights are being strained. I'll want you to be discreet with your own actions."

Immediately, Ellis's line of sight moved towards Fianna, who stood behind Kamito.

Her expression immediately turned stern.

"Y-You guys, what are you doing at such a place with just the two of you!"

Before Kamito knew it, a sword was pressing near his throat.

...As always, it was a god-speed sword draw.

"No way, you guys—"

"How dumb, isn't there only one thing a boy and a girl of age could do in the middle of the forest."

"Wh-What was that!?"

Ellis's face got dyed bright red at Fianna's words.

The sword's edge was raised with a jerk.

"Oi, Fianna!?"

Kamito shouted, but Fianna feigned ignorance.

"Th-The academy doesn't have a rule that prohibits illicit sexual relationships. At any rate, the opposite sex isn't here, after all. However, even if the rules allow it, the Knights won't! What were you doing, say it!"

"Well, what did we do? However, isn't it generally like your imagination?"

Fianna pressed her breasts tightly onto Kamito's arm.

Ellis's eyes increasingly rose with danger.

"Fianna, why do you always make pretenses, which is like pouring oil onto the fire!?"

"Ev-Even though I'd gotten a slightly better opinion of you..., you insolent person!"

She swung her sword.

Kamito jumped back in a fluster to avoid that merciless attack.

"Wa-Wait, Ellis! Knights, please come, there's a murdering demon here!"

"You fool, I **am** a Knight!"

"I said it in irony!"

Kamito shouted.

"Captain, you're wasting your time."

Rakka placed her hand on Ellis's shoulder.

"Apologies, whenever our captain is before you, she gets emotionally unstable."

"...Th-That's not true!"

Ellis's face turned bright red and she snarled at Reishia , who chuckled.

For the time being, it seemed the danger to his life had subsided. Kamito took a breath of relief.

"Jeez, Ellis, what's the matter since this morning?"

"Ah, it has been decided that we are departing to a mine for a quest. To use a light source inside the tunnel, we came to capture light attribute spirits."

The one who answered was Rakka.

That's right. They were holding lanterns inserted with small spirit crystals in their hands.

"A mine? Could it be, by any chance, the same Mine Town Gado investigation quest as us?"

"Ah, that's right. Although, we didn't have the investigation quest."

"What do you mean?"

"It is a quest newly added this morning. The details were the arrest of the assailant and the recovery of the stolen highly classified materials."

"The assailant— that Jio Inzagi brat."

He was a male elementalist, who used several contracted spirits.

He seemed to know something about that boy's goal.

"That's right. We haven't gotten hold of the brat's true identity, but the highly classified material stolen from the library was something that had recordings about the strategic-class militarized spirit, «Jormungandr», sealed in the postwar period in Mine Town Gado. It seems that there are people secretly maneuvering at the outskirts of Mine Town."

Ellis held her temper, seemingly vexed.

"It's because of Jio Inzagi —that brat— that the confidence in the Sylphid Knights fell to the ground. To restore the Knights' honor I, as the Captain, have to arrest him."

Rakka and Reishia strongly nodded to Ellis's words.

(...It seemed like it won't end as an ordinary earthquake investigation.)

A premonition passed through Kamito's mind.

There was the stolen strategic-class militarized spirit's highly classified material.

And then, there was the assailant, who somehow knew Kamito's true identity.

(Wasn't Greyworth holding on to the information regarding that assailant?)

Kamito honestly did not understand what that Dusk Witch was making him do. However, he thought about it , for Greyworth to present an S rank quest at this timing, he felt something intentional behind her actions.

(That witch...)

Kamito groaned loathsomely.

After that, he faced Ellis—

"...Hey, Ellis. Since our goals are the same, why don't you cooperate with us?"

That Jio Inzagi assailant wasn't a common opponent.

He, of course, knew about Ellis's ability, but he wasn't an opponent that could be managed with her skills.

However, Ellis decisively shook her head.

"Kamito, I appreciate your feelings, but I just can't borrow your help. This is something that the Sylphid Knights should settle."

"Well, you may think like that, but don't overdo it."

"A-Ah... you too."

Ellis turned red and faced away.

Fianna, who saw that situation, pouted her lips seemingly sullen for some reason.

Part 5

At that time, Claire was hugging a pillow on her bed and writhing.

"To get the boy I li-like to rub my b-breasts!"

She shouted with her face flushed red and struck the pillow. *Posun*. *Posun*.

—To enlarge her breasts, it was best to get a gentleman she likes to rub them.

Rinslet told her that.

"Th-There's no way I can do that! Besides, a boy I li-like—"

While hugging the pillow tightly, she rolled idly on her bed...and suddenly stopped.

"..."

At that moment, Kamito's face came to Claire's mind for some reason.

Like the prince of the romance novels targeted at teens, which Claire loved reading, Kamito, in her imagination, forcibly pushed Claire down on the bed—

"Fuwaa, wh-what are you doing, idiot, pervert!"

"Surprisingly, it seems you do have breasts."

"Eh?... I-Is that so? That's not true, it's the same as usual, as usual."

"I'll make them even bigger. With this magnificent technique of mine."

"No, hey, fua, a-aa ♪"

Kamito's fingertips in her imagination tightly grabbed Claire's breasts.

One rub, two rubs, each time her breasts went expanding like a fluffy cake.

("Fua, hn, wh-what is this, how amazing...!?")

Her uniform button popped out with a snap and her underwear ripped, and then—

"...There's no way that would happen!"

Claire hit her pillow and writhed.

"Wh-What's with the magnificent technique... Am I an id-idiot or what?!"

"Nyaa?"

"Wh-What are you looking at, Scarlet!"

She faced the floor and threw the pillow, and the fire spirit escaped in a fluster.

"Ahh, I-It's all that guy's fault!"

While hugging her shoulders with both hands, she increased the pace of her breathing.

(...What do I do, I've somehow begun feeling hot. I wonder if I have a fever.)

Her body was hot for some reason. Claire placed both hands on her cheeks and was struck with an idea.

(...I-I wonder if they'll become big, if I rub them myself .)

"I-I shall try it out..."

With her fingertips, she held her own breasts just a little.

"Ah, hn..."

She involuntarily let out a voice due to the light numb-like sensation.

(Wh-What do I do...it somehow feels good.)

Funyuu. *Funyuu*.

"Fua, ah, hn, no, this... is not good and yet, hn."

She was rubbing her breasts in a half conscious state—

Gacha— the sound of the room's door opening resounded.

"...Y-You, what are you doing?"

Kamito was standing with a puzzled-looking face.

"...Fua!? N-No, this isn't what it looks like!"

Immediately following what she said, countless fireballs released by Claire blew Kamito away.

Part 6

With this and that, it was one hour later. At the plaza in front of the gate, Kamito was preparing for the departure.

It wasn't a place that far from the academy. It was a distance that wouldn't take a day riding through the highway by horse.

It seemed that Ellis's team had already departed. As for the girls, who were receiving the wind spirit's divine protection, they should be able to reach there even earlier .

Equipping Est on his waist, who had transformed into her sword form, he was confirming the equipment.

"I am late, Kamito-san."

A platinum blond ojou-sama came leading a horse.

"Eh, Rinslet's also coming?"

Kamito asked Claire.

"Yeah, it was a high grade strategic trade. In exchange for the important piece of information she held, I allowed her to join the quest this time."

"Important information? What's that?"

"It is a se-secret... it's an important piece of information after all, it can't be told to someone like you."

"Certainly, it's an important piece of information to you. A method to enlarge your breasts—!"

"Hey, Rinslet Laurenfrost, do you want to turn to cinders?"

"Hey, Claire, your eyes, your eyes are serious!"

Rinslet backed off.

"Ah, I'm worried, milady. To go to such a dangerous place."

At her side, Carol, the maid, was worrying about her master with her hands put together like she was praying.

As she was not an elementalist, she naturally couldn't join the quest. She was a care-taker at the academy.

"It is alright, Carol. I am worried about you instead."

Rinslet hugged her brave maid who had affection for her master.

"I wonder if you can wake up alone in the morning even when I'm not around. Eat precisely three meals. For the washing, take care not to let it be covered in bubbles again."

"Yes, milady, I will do my best even if milady isn't around."

"...No, that is strange."

Kamito retorted to the two of them, who were somehow getting excited, with a deadpan look.

"By any chance, could Carol be a terribly no-good maid?"

Thereupon, Rinslet sternly turned around and glared at Kamito.

"What are you saying? It is fine as long as a maid is cute!"

"Well, if you're alright with that, it's fine, however..."

(Or perhaps I should say that Rinslet is truly a perfect superwoman at all housework!?)

...It was surprisingly beyond the truth.

"The meals milady makes are very delicious."

"Carol, you should also do some work..."

Kamito was amazed at the no-good maid.

"St-Stop, I said stop, didn't I!"

Such a scream was heard from behind.

Kamito turned around and Fianna, who was on the horse, was being swung about—

"Kyaa!"

Thud! Her butt fell to the ground. It seemed that her reflexes weren't very good.

"Jeez, despite being a royal princess, you can't ride a horse? Horse riding is a noble's basic knowledge?"

"The me-method to ride a horse wasn't taught at the « Divine Ritual Institute»!"

While beating off the mud stuck on her skirt, Fianna answered back.

"Horseback combat practice is a required subject in the academy, it's something you have to get used to. Well, with those breasts, it might be difficult to keep your balance though?"

"Yes, that's right. As I do not have aero breasts[3] that don't catch air resistance like yours, I may certainly be unsuited for riding a horse. Since I catch air resistance, that is."

"Wh...a-aero breasts, what?! Don't make up new words !"

Rinslet came around at the spot where the two were quarreling.

Brushing her platinum blond hair, she faced Fianna and smiled.

"I'm Rinslet Laurenfrost, I'm pleased to make your acquaintance from now on. And, as Kazehaya Kamito is

my manservant, could you please not make a move on him as you wish?"

"Ah, I don't plan on making a move on him. Since he's your manservant, how about you properly discipline him ?"

"You can sure use your words, your Highness... hohoho."

"Fufufu..."

Between the two of them, sparks were scattering.

"You girls..."

Kamito, who was on the horse, was astounded and sighed.

Fianna turned towards Kamito's direction and an impish smile surfaced.

"Hey, as I can't ride a horse, Kamito will give me a ride ."

"Uh?"

Before Kamito answered, Fianna had jumped behind him.

"Wh...!"

"Come on!"

Claire and Rinslet raised their voice simultaneously.

Fianna wrapped her hands around Kamito's waist and tightly embraced him.

Fuyon, the sensation of her soft breasts touching him was felt.

"W-Why me? Have Claire or Rinslet give you a ride."

"I want to be given a ride by Kamito. Or, do you want your true identity exposed?"

"Guu..."

"N-No, that's no good!"

Claire struck the ground with a whip with a snap.

"Ah, why?"

"Wh-Why...? A-At any rate, that's no good!"

"Even if you're a royal princess, that's unfair!"

Rinslet also sullenly puffed her cheeks.

...He didn't understand very well what was unfair.

"Oh dear, it seems I have many difficulties in store for me..."

Kamito deeply sighed on the horse with Fianna sitting behind him.

Chapter 7: The Abandoned-Mine Battle

Part 1

It was the dead of the night when, after riding their horses throughout the day, the party reached the entrance of Mine Town.

Since all the members rode here practically without rest, they were totally exhausted.

However, it wasn't possible to have a carefree rest.

"This is Mine Town Gado... It's like a ghost town."

Rinslet, who dismounted from the horse, calmly muttered.

"It's because several decades have passed since it became an abandoned mine. There should be no humans living here."

"Humans— huh."

Claire squinted her eyes staring deep into the darkness .

Bluish-white will-o'-wisps were wavering here and there near a ruin.

They were low-rank spirits that were floating about. For this sort of ruin, there were many nasty spirits gathered.

It was just like how the «Spirit Forest» was at night.

On the other side of the abandoned town, still containing countless abandoned tunnels, huge mines stood towering over the surroundings.

Gado Mine— It once produced a large quantity of spirit crystals, it was the Empire's largest mine.

During the war, the spirit crystals were dug up and exhausted, and it hadn't even been twenty years since it became an abandoned mine.

Below that mine, the strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr was sleeping; sealed by the Ordesia Knights of that time.

"—By the way, you better get away from him."

Claire glared at Fianna, who was tightly clinging onto Kamito's arm.

"I don't want to, after all, Kamito-kun will protect me."

"You may be in a position to be protected. However, to begin with, what's the matter with your contracted spirit? As that elementalist might be hiding in ambush, have it in a state where you can use it immediately."

"That's—"

Fianna's words were unusually hesitant.

She tightly closed her lips and abruptly turned away.

"I-It still isn't the time. The contracted spirit of the Ordesia royal family must not be summoned so indiscreetly. It's clearly different from your cat."

"Wh-What was that...!"

The ground where the four were standing on suddenly shook greatly.

"An earthquake...!?"

"It seems like we had better hurry. I have a bad premonition."

Claire softly muttered, and in her palm, a spirit magic fire was lighted.

The place of their objective was found instantly without even searching.

At the deepest part of the main street going through the abandoned town— before the entrance of the mine, there was a gigantic grand shrine.

It was a splendid shrine that made use of several gigantic stone pillars.

A grand shrine of this scale existed only in the capital even in the Ordesia Empire.

However—

"How terrible, this..."

The grand shrine —which had its sculptures destroyed , had the spirit crystals inlaid in its stone pillar robbed and had once entertained the spirits— had transformed into a ruin that was even tragic to look at.

"How strange—"

The one, who noticed the unusual phenomenon, was Fianna, who had received training as Queen.

"What's strange?"

"This shrine, despite being in such ruins, shows traces of someone taking the trouble to perform a ritual. Furthermore, many times over the period of these several months."

"Ritual?"

Nodding at Claire, who was frowning, with a serious face, Fianna kneeled onto the ground.

It seemed that she was looking for footprints and traces of scrape marks and so forth that were on the stone paving.

"This dance— is probably the Ritual of Releasing. It seems that it was more or less arranged, though."

"The Ritual of Releasing..."

Kamito groaned in a low tone.

It was because he remembered how the elementalist, who was also a male elementalist just like Kamito, assailed the academy and took away the highly classified material concerning the seal specification.

(Is that brat really planning on releasing the sealed strategic-class militarized spirit?) Jormungandr

It was impossible for any kind of elementalist to control Jormungandr individually.

If that was the case, what was his goal?

At any rate, if the spirit's seal was undone, it was certain that the towns in the vicinity would be turned into scorched earth.

"Is the seal almost undone?"

"No, it's still alright. This shrine isn't the superior «true shrine»."

"The «true shrine»...? What do you mean?"

"The grand shrine here, at most, it's purpose was to camouflage the original shrine— Which should be at an

important place like the mine. There were many splendid grand shrines built needlessly above ground to hide the existence of the original shrine. Of course, it doesn't mean that this shrine isn't usable, though."

"That means there's a real shrine somewhere?"

"Yes, it's mostly likely being hidden deep in the mine."

Fianna raised her head, and at that moment.

"Be careful, there's something here!"

Rinslet, who was on a lookout of their surroundings, suddenly shouted.

Kamito turned around—

In the surroundings of the shrine that the four of them were in, there was a wriggling crowd of figures of people .

"Humans? No, they're—"

"Fire, illuminate!"

Claire recited the incantation, and a spirit magic fire lit in an empty space.

The figures that were shone by the flame's light were—

"Wh-What!?"

It was a crowd of skeletons holding rusty swords and clubs in their hands.

From the gap of their bones, something like a black fog was being emitted out.

"What, are these... spirits!?"

"The skeletons that were left behind seem to be possessed by low-rank spirits."

While muttering— Kamito noticed something with a " hmm".

Claire was slightly holding onto Kamito's uniform sleeve.

"...You, by any chance, are you weak against horror-ish things like these?"

"Th-That's not it— Who do you think I am?!"

"You don't have to push yourself, look out, hold on."

"...I-It's not anything scary."

Claire, who was hiding her face while biting her lips, was a little cute.

"At any rate, it's strange—"

Normally, the so-called low-rank spirits don't possess a distinct self.

Even if there were rare times when they attacked humans, there shouldn't be a time when they formed a group like this.

"Kamito-kun, these guys, you know. They are the ones doing the ritual here."

"What was that?"

Kamito was surprised and turned around. Fianna nodded.

"The movements of those skeletons are pretty rough, but...it's just like the Ritual of Releasing."

"Don't tell me, the low-rank spirits were doing an advanced Ritual of Releasing?"

Kamito stared at the approaching figures. Now that she mentioned it, he could see that the skeletons possessed by the spirits were moving with a fixed regularity.

"No, such a thing is impossible... There has to be some practitioner manipulating the spirits."

"Well, does it mean that these guys won't come to attack us?"

Claire tightly griped Kamito's sleeve as she said that.

The group of skeletons went up the stairs of the shrine, walking in a slow manner.

"Freezing ice fang, pierce «Freezing Arrow»!"

The ice arrow, released by Rinslet, collected and mowed down the group of wriggling skeletons.

It was the high-rank demon ice spirit «Fenrir's» elemental waffe.

To an elementalist, an enemy of this level was only small fry.

From the broken skeletons, a black fog spouted out and vanished into an empty space.

"That's a darkness attribute spirit—"

Suddenly, a flash occurred in Kamito's mind.

(Don't tell me—)

He cast his sight to his left hand covered by his black leather glove.

A piercing-like pain was running in his engraved spirit seal, at that moment—

"...!?"

The sound of a terrible explosion came from the direction of the mine.

"Don't tell me the battle is beginning!?"

"Let's go, Kamito!"

Claire sounded her whip with a snap, and began running.

Part 2

It was the spirit crystal mine that towered above the abandoned town. They finally arrived at its entrance—

From within the tunnel, the violent sound of weapons reverberated.

"Kamito, that—"

In the deep darkness where Claire pointed at, an intense flash occurred.

The one who was fighting, was Ellis Fahrengart, wielding her elemental waffe lance.

Her ponytail hair was fluttering in the thunderous-blowing wind.

Her appearance showed that she had her Knights armor destroyed and was covered in lacerations. From that, he could see that she had wounds all over her body.

"Ha, as expected of Captain-sama, you've entertained me considerably, haven't you?!"

A loud ear-splitting laughter resounded in the tunnel.

Before Ellis, stood a boy with glaring shiny red eyes.

Jio Inzagi— A male elementalist, who called himself the successor of the Demon King.

Rakka and Reishia, lay collapsed at his feet, injured.

"You bastard, my comrades, how dare you—"

Ellis swung her «Ray Hawk».

The tunnel wall was destroyed, and the hard bedrock was smashed up like glass.

Jio gave a shrilling laugh as he jumped up. It was not a movement possible for humans— there might be some body-strengthening-spirit possessing him.

"Hey, hey, is that it? Is being a part of the Knights, just a children's game?"

"You bastard!"

Ellis raged at the insult towards the Knights.

"Evil wind, thou, become countless blades and cut up my enemies—"

She released the power of her «Ray Hawk» — the elemental waffe of her demon wind spirit «Simorgh».

It was a spear that created blades of wind, something that tormented Kamito in their duel at the academy. Even if he were to avoid it by a paper-thin margin, the countless wind blades that were additionally invoked would cut the target into shreds—

However.

"How reckless— reflect it, Demon Mirror Wall Spirit!"

The moment Jio shouted, a shiny red mirror appeared before Ellis.

When the wings of her lance of wind, clad in wind, touched the mirror surface; the countless wind blades turned to bare their teeth towards Ellis.

"...!?"

Cut up by the blades' while boisterously dancing, Ellis's body was thrown into a wall.

"—Ellis!"

Kamito ran with Terminus Est in his hand.

Having seemed to already notice their presence— Jio turned around, and sneered.

"Yo, more idiots are squirming out."

"Kamito, don't!"

Kamito's movement stopped for a moment in response to hearing Claire's voice from behind.

At that moment, an engraved spirit seal on Jio's right arm glowed—

"—It's fine till the inside of their lungs are sore, manifest, Rotting Rafflesia Poison Spirit!"

A thick bluish purple smog gushed out with tremendous force.

The skin-burning smog of poison wrapped Kamito's whole body, and was invading his lungs—

"Ga, Ha...!"

Pain was running in his eyes. His throat was hot as if it was being burned.

From the gaps between his fingers covering his mouth, blood spilled out and dripped onto the ground.

(This is a poison attribute spirit... is this smog itself its elemental waffe!?)

A muttering groan echoed in the tunnel.

Bearing the burning-like pain, Kamito opened his eyes slightly.

Ellis and the two girls, flat-out bathed in the poison smog, were cowering and in agony.

"Ellis...Kuu!"

His throat muscles had a spasm, so he couldn't speak out satisfactorily. It was still possible to stand over here,

but if he continued to advance, he would lose his consciousness before reaching the girls.

(...Why didn't he receive the poison?)

A wide range extermination type spirit like Rafflesia couldn't be handled normally.

As controlling it was hard, if he did it poorly, he would end up dragging himself into the smog too.

However, Jio Inzagi was calmly standing in the smog of deadly poison.

—Then, Kamito noticed it.

There was a slight wind flow in the boy's surroundings.

(...I see, he's using a wind attribute spirit at the same time!)

An elementalist that uses multiple contracted spirits—in that case, by combining the powers of the other spirits, he heard that they could also use a spirit that would be originally too much to handle.

"...Damn, isn't that almost like cheating?!"

Kamito cursed in his heart.

(If it was Rinslet's demon bow, could she shoot from outside the smog's effective range?)

He turned around and peeked behind, but—

Rinslet nocked her ice arrow, and without moving, she affixed her aim at Jio.

(—She isn't shooting?)

Rinslet's judgment was correct.

Jio was displaying Demon Mirror Spirit, which had reflected Ellis's elemental waffe.

Mirror Wall

If she shot poorly, she might end up finishing off Ellis and the others, who had collapsed nearby.

It seemed that Claire was standing like she was covering for Fianna, who was performing an aria with her fire attribute elemental waffe.

It was a mere second of thought, but meanwhile, the bodies of Ellis and the others were being eaten into by the poison.

(Damn...)

His body was experiencing a burning-like irritation.

—At that moment.

In the dark tunnel, a faint rumbling resounded.

(Ellis!?)

"Oh...winds, mow down my enemies— «Wind Bombs»!"

At that moment, the lump of violent wind released blew away the fog of poison without leaving a trace.

And then—

"Haa, Haa...ka...haa!"

Ellis pierced her demon lance of wind onto the ground , and stood up.

Her stab-proof uniform was cut up, and her whole body was full of wounds.

Both her legs, which were covered in her torn stockings, were having severe cramps.

Even so, the appearance of her standing up frigidly and firmly was—

Beautiful to the extent that he was spontaneously charmed.

Ellis prepared her elemental waffe lance, then she glared at Jio and declared in a hoarse voice.

"Putting the pride of the Sylphid Knights on the line, even if I lose... you will be defeated!"

"That hurt... you death escapee."

Jio, who received a direct hit from the violent wind, warped his lips, and clicked his tongue.

"If that's the case, I'll beat you to death as you wish!"

The spirit seals engraved on Jio's whole body ominously glowed—

"—Like I'll let you!"

At the same time as Kamito moved away, two blasts of fireballs were released towards Jio.

It was Claire covering him. In the moment when Jio repelled the fireballs, Kamito took his chance and accelerated— drawing close to Jio.

And then, hacking down the very space Jio was in, Kamito mowed down directly horizontally with Terminus Est.

Gaa— The bedrock, touched by the sword's tip, was smashed up.

"Haa, don't make such a scary face, hey!"

Jio, who dodged the sword swing, jumped up and landed on a rocky area that was about to collapse.

Without pursuing, Kamito went straight towards Ellis and the others.

Ellis was out of breath, and seemed like she was going to collapse at any time.

"Ellis, are you alright? I'll lend—"

"D-Don't do something... unnecessary."

When he tried to lend her help when she wobbled, she shook off his hand.

"I do not need all of your—"

"Don't be stubborn about trivial things, think about them."

Ellis's facial expression stiffened. Rakka and Reshia had collapsed on the ground. They seemed to be alive, but if they were left like that, their lives would be in danger.

Ellis herself was in a condition where all she could do was just barely stand.

"Guu...Kazehaya Kamito, I owe you a debt."

"It isn't something like a loan. It's natural to help my comrades."

"...!"

Ellis's cheeks reddened at Kamito's words.

Laying the injured Ellis by the wall for her to rest, Kamito fixed his sights on Jio.

"You, how dare you—"

Ellis Fahrengart— She was a girl with a strong sense of justice, with her seriousness and her bravery.

Just by looking at her injured appearance, his anger surged and seemed to overflow.

"Don't get in my way, it was the long-awaited part where I beat that impertinent girl to death."

Jio smirked as he slowly got off the rocky area.

"—I'm relieved."

Kamito wielded his sword and glared at Jio.

"If it's a nasty rascal like you, I can seriously beat you up."

"Haa, aren't you saying something! It's too bad, but it's impossible for you to defeat me."

"We are also here!"

Claire and the others came running. Holding her Flame Tongue, she stood next to Kamito.

Rinslet nocked an arrow to her ice demon bow, and Fianna was grasping spirit crystals in both hands.

"Fianna, can I count on you for the treatment of Ellis and the others?"

"Yes, I'm holding a few healing spirit crystals. However, the effect is limited to only giving a temporary peace of mind."

Fianna nodded with a tense expression.

"Kamito, you and I will corner that guy. Rinslet will be the support artillery battery."

"What is a s-support artillery battery!? I am a splendid archer!"

Rinslet snarled, but Claire didn't respond.

"—Hey, is the discussion over?"

Jio calmly laughed as he came closer.

The spirit crest engraved on his right arm glowed ominously, and a bluish-white flash of lightning surged out.

What appeared in that hand was— the same sword elemental waffe as Est.

"Shall we find out which is stronger, Sword Spirit Gladius or that sword?"

"Don't mess around. You'd better not confuse my Est with that third-rate sword spirit."

Wielding Terminus Est, Kamito ferociously roared.

Part 3

And then, the blade dance began.

High-pitched metallic sounds reverberated together. Every time a sword flash occurred, sparks scattered within that dim light.

"Jio Inzagi— what on earth is your goal?!"

"Huh, I don't have anything like a goal. Honestly, to me, I'm indifferent about
the strategic-class militarized spirit (Jormungandr). I'll defeat you and prove that I'm the successor of the Demon King— That's all."

"What successor of the Demon King? You megalomaniac rascal!"

Kamito, who stepped into his area, mowed down with Terminus Est with both hands.

The sword's pressure was tremendous. Jio promptly guarded with Gladius— however,

"What!?"

Together with a high-pitched metallic sound— Jio's Sword Spirit (Gladius) was smashed to pieces.

Jio's expression distorted in shock.

"Hey, hey, what an elemental waffe— To do that to my sword spirit in one blow?"

"Sorry, my Est is the strongest sword spirit."

Kamito stepped in closer.

Jio recited a summoning, and summoned a sword spirit into his hand again.

"There's still more to come, it starts after this!"

"It's useless—"

Aiming at the sword spirit that appeared from an empty space, Kamito relentlessly swung down his sword .

There was the sound of steel shattering, and Jio's second sword spirit also tragically vanished.

In addition to making his second sword spirit vanish, Terminus Est didn't even have a chip on its edge.

It was an elemental waffe that held two names, the « Demon King Killing Sacred Sword» and «Demon Slayer» .

It was terrifying because even with this, it was not in its complete state.

However, Jio still kept his composed expression.

"Hmm, in that case, this will be next!"

From the spirit seals on his whole body, flashes of lightning gushed out— a third sword appeared in Jio's hand.

(..., this guy, what the heck, how many spirits is he contracted with!?)

As expected, even Kamito's face expressed impatience.

Even the strongest sword spirit Est had a large weak point.

Her divine power consumption was too intense.

As a result of getting used to controlling it, he wouldn't suddenly faint like before, but if the battle was dragged on, he was certain that he would be exhausted eventually.

If he assumed that Jio Inzagi really was contracted to seventy-two spirits—

(It's bad if this keeps up—)

This wasn't an opponent whom he could decide the victory with one blow, like the rampaging giant spirit at Academy Town.

If this became a prolonged battle, he'd be at a disadvantage.

(...However, is that guy's divine power inexhaustible!?)

If he was using this many spirits, his divine power consumption should also rapidly increase, however—

"Kamito, I'll cover you!"

At that moment, Claire's swung her Flame Tongue, and it came flying in an arc.

There was a red hot afterglow that shone in the darkness— Her carefully-aimed whip quickly entangled Jio's face.

"Tch, don't get in my way!"

Jio summoned a spirit as a translucent ice ball, and aiming at Claire, he threw it.

"What, such a thing!"

Claire released a spirit magic fireball to intercept the ice spirit—

However, that was a trap.

"...!?"

The ice ball, which blasted before her eyes, transformed into countless needles, and cut up Claire's whole body.

"Kyaa!"

"Claire!"

Kamito's awareness strayed for a moment to Claire's scream.

"Don't look away!"

Seizing that chance, Jio quickly drove in for a slash—

Kamito barely stopped the blow with Terminus Est's edge.

However, Jio didn't slow down his attacks. He kept it up, pressing on and approaching closer—

Ren Ashbell

"What's wrong, Strongest Blade Dancer— Is that all you got?"

As he stopped the sword pushing him back, Kamito grit his teeth.

If he was still the Ren Ashbell of three years ago—

He was sure to not have turned towards Claire and gave Jio the chance to use his spirit.

As an elementalist, it was a fatal three year blank.

He had a contracted spirit that couldn't draw out its original power.

(Ah, it is certain that I became weak. However—)

Exhaling with a puff— Kamito suddenly jumped back.

"Freezing ice fang, pierce «Freezing Arrow»!"

At that moment, Rinslet's released ice arrow rained at the spot the two of them were at.

It was a direct hit— Jio's silhouette was swallowed up by the downpour of arrows and disappeared.

"Hmm, it is troubling that you have forgotten me!"

Placing her hand at her waist, Rinslet quickly brushed up her platinum-blonde hair.

While Kamito was stopping the sword, she was holding an aim affixed on him.

From the crumbled rocky area, there was a thick cloud of dust rising up.

They didn't think he could be fine after receiving that rain of arrows.

However.

"Hn, did you do something just now?"

Jio— stood up from within the cloud of dust.

He smirked, and turned to Rinslet.

"No way...it should have been a direct hit!?"

"«Argos» — an earth spirit that protects its elementalist automatically."

From Jio's surroundings, cones of rocks were pierced out from the ground and standing tall.

Her Freezing Arrow was defended by that.

"...What a thing..."

"And then, this fellow, uh— can also be used in such a way."

Jio turned over his wrist.

"Kyaaaa!"

At that moment, cones pierced out from the ground at Rinslet's feet, and crucified her to the wall.

Her academy uniform was torn to pieces, and fine textured white skin became exposed.

With both her arms placed in crucifixion, Rinslet bit her lips in shame.

"Guu...Th-This is unforgivable... to do such... to me..."

Glaring firmly at Jio, Rinslet's body quivered, seemingly vexed.

"—Jio Inzagi!"

Kamito raged, and attacked with Terminus Est.

The massive slash collected and destroyed the cones standing in a line, and came close to Jio—

However, it was till that extent.

"Guu..."

Terminus Est which was a large-sized sword suddenly became a small-sized short sword.

It was the result of Est, who consumed a huge amount of divine power, being unable to maintain her form as an elemental waffe.

"Ren Ashbell— you're no longer the strongest blade dancer."

Jio sneered.

"That may be so. After all, I had a three year blank."

"No, that's not it. The reason you became weak is—"

At that moment, a spear of light was born in Jio's palm .

It wasn't a close range weapon, it was a shooting-type elemental waffe.

Kamito, who made a judgment in an instant, was about to dodge, but—

(—Wrong!)

Just before that, he realized Jio's aim.

"Something like this!"

It wasn't an attack aimed at Kamito.

The spear of light—

Was pointed and released toward Fianna and the injured female Knights behind Kamito.

(Damn...!)

Kamito thrust himself in the way at once, and caught the spear of light with his whole body.

Part 4

(—What?)

Fianna, who was treating Ellis and the others, raised her face startled.

At that moment, a dazzling flash was produced, and an eardrum-bursting explosion reverberated.

She reflexively closed her eyes. The fragments of rubble, which came flying, struck her whole body.

...Before long, the thunderous sound lessened.

"U..."

She moaned in pain, as she slowly opened her eyes—

Before her, Kamito, who was injured, had collapsed.

"...Ka-Kamito-kun?"

"...Fia...na... are you alright?"

Kamito pierced Terminus Est through the ground, placed his knees on the ground, and tried to stand up.

Having received a direct hit at point-blank range, his academy uniform, which excelled in its defensive abilities, had turned into shreds.

He seemed to be enduring the pain, and cold sweat was flowing on his forehead.

Fianna quickly surveyed her surroundings.

Ellis and her two female comrades had collapsed. They were especially not in a condition that they could stand up.

Claire was injured and had lost consciousness, and Rinslet was placed in a crucifixion on the wall.

And then— from the front, Jio Inzagi was slowly walking.

—Almost like a death god.

"That's your weakness. I don't care whether or not it was subconsciously, but you have been continuously taking notice of the fellows behind as you were fighting."

"Fianna...back down."

Kamito commanded Fianna, who was about to approach, with his hand.

"Kamito-kun!"

With that body, there's no way he could fight.

He also couldn't sufficiently use his elemental waffe, and it was a hopeless situation even at best, and yet despite that—

"I do not want to lose important things— never again."

Kamito faced the front, and stood up.

It wasn't the light of hope in his eyes. What was dwelling in his pupils was dark despair.

And yet, he stood up.

This boy was once called the Strongest Blade Dancer.

Ren Ashbell

"..."

Jio shrugged his shoulders like he rapidly lost interest.

And then, told him in a cruel voice.

"—I see. Well then, die."

The spirit seal all over his body emitted a glow, and a black fog coiled around his right hand.

"Death Spirit Thanatos— it is one of the strongest spirits I have. I received it from your contracted spirit."

"My... contracted spirit...?"

Kamito muttered in a dry voice.

"...Don't tell me...this is about Restia—!?"

His fingertip, which was clad in death approached Kamito who couldn't move sufficiently— just before that.

Fianna brushed back her long black hair, and quickly stood up.

"Hey, could you please not touch my things so thoughtlessly?"

"...Ah?"

Jio— was so shocked that he opened his mouth.

"...Fianna?"

Kamito gazed at her face profile with a dumbfounded expression as well.

"Move aside, Kamito-kun."

Fianna calmly stood before Jio and blocked his way.

"Hey, is something wrong with your head, ojou-sama?
"

"Watch your mouth, who do you think I am?"

Fianna fixed a glare directly at Jio, who sneered.

Four years ago— It was like that time when she stood before and blocked the Calamity Queen.

"Fianna, you idiot, run away!"

Claire, who crawled out from the mountain of rubble, shouted.

Fianna slowly shook her head—

(You protected me— That's why this time, I'll protect you!)

"—I'll tell you my name, Fianna Ray Ordesia, the Ordesia Empire's second royal princess!"

"—I am a punisher as an impartial enforcer, and one who hands down holy judgment in the king's name!"

At that moment, a dazzling flash was produced from Fianna's bosom.

Yes, the oath she shouted just now was indeed— the spirit's releasing keywords.

She quickly untied the string at her bosom, and a shiny red stone tumbled down into her palm.

It was a blood-like red spirit crystal that was processed like a comma-shaped jewel.[4]

"No way, that's... don't tell me, the Blood Stone!?"

Claire, who realized its true identity, widened her eyes .

"You witch...!"

He might have felt some sort of instinctive threat, as Jio released Thanatos at the girl before him—

"Come out, thou, the sword of judgment that buries the darkness— Sacred King of Destruction «Magna Carta »!"

The red spirit crystal exploded.

There was a dazzling flash. An enormous pillar of light went through Jio Inzagi.

And then— together with the thunderous sound, the tunnel's ceiling collapsed.

Chapter 8: Fianna's confession

Part 1

"Ug..."

"Kamito!"

"Kamito-kun"

When Kamito awakened, there were the faces of two girls before his eyes.

"...Claire, Fianna."

"Great, you've awakened."

"You're too rash... idiot."

...It seemed that he overused his divine power and had fainted.

Upon getting up from the cold ground, Kamito looked around his vicinity.

The flickering glow of the spirit crystal was dimly illuminating the darkness.

The tunnel had collapsed and it seemed that the path was completely blocked by the fallen earth and sand.

"Both of you, are your injuries alright?"

"Yes, we are... are you alright?"

"Ah, I only overused my divine power a little. What, have I worried you?

"Id-Idiot, it's not I like I was worried or anything!"

"Ouchhhh!"

Claire's palm landed a clean hit exactly on his wound. Kamito writhed in the intense pain.

"...Come on, what are you doing?"

Fianna sighed in astonishment.

Kamito pressed his hurting shoulder as he surveyed the surroundings,

"Are the others safe?"

"Yes...although, it's hard to say that they're safe. For now, I've given them some emergency treatment."

When Fianna held up the light, the appearance of Ellis and the others lying on the ground could be seen.

...Their condition certainly couldn't be said as 'safe'.

Rakka and Reishia, who received the poison directly, were in an unconscious critical state.

Ellis seemed to be conscious, but it seemed that walking was impossible in that condition.

Next to Rinslet, who was leaning on and sitting against the wall, Fenrir was licking its master's wounds.

"What on earth happened to him — Jio Inzagi?"

"Fianna released the spirit that was sealed in the spirit crystal. He was swallowed into the pillar of light and disappeared...Well, although, I don't think he's dead."

"Was that a spirit crystal...?"

When Kamito faced towards Fianna, she nodded with a "Yes".

"However, a spirit crystal that can seal such a spirit—"

It was such a destructive power that it forced back Jio Inzagi's Thanatos, and made the tunnel collapse.

That holy spirit that Fianna released was, without a doubt, a high ranking spirit.

However, he had not heard of something like the existence of a spirit crystal and so forth that can seal a high ranking spirit.

"Blood Stone—a treasure handed down in the Ordesia royal family."

"...?"

"Hey you, you also don't know the Blood Stone? It's common knowledge for elementalists."

Claire sighed in astonishment at Kamito frowning.

"It can't be helped, I'm different from a noble, and I'm unfamiliar with things like that."

When Kamito said that, Claire shrugged her shoulders in disappointment and gave an explanation.

"Blood Stone isn't an ordinary spirit crystal. It can seal a part of a high ranking spirit's power with a special spirit crystal that was mined at a sacred ground of Astral Zero. Of course, it isn't something that you can buy with money or power. It is a genuine treasure of national-level , after all."

"Is that so..."

Although her existence was erased from the royal family, Fianna was the former second princess of the Ordesia Empire. The moment she was admitted into Areishia Spirit Academy, she might have been made to hand it over in the screening.

"I had tricked the stupid palace guards and pilfered it from the royal family's treasure hall. As I had switched it with an imitation, it's alright."

The princess puffed her chest out.

"Ah, I thought it was like that... Hn?"

Incidentally, Kamito picked up a strange feeling that something was out of place.

The out-of-place feeling's true identity was... Fianna's pushed out chest.

...Small. It had obviously become small.

(That reminds me, just now Fianna...)

She was hiding that spirit crystal—Blood Stone in her chest.

Although it wasn't such a big thing, how was she hiding that?

"Ug... D-Don't look..."

Fianna, who noticed Kamito's line of sight, crossed both her hands and bashfully covered her chest.

"Kamito, Fianna, you know, had been deceiving us all this time!"

Claire thrust out her finger at her in a snap like she was blaming her.

"Deceiving?"

"That's right, this girl is a fake-breast princess!"

"..."

Kamito slowly turned towards Fianna with a deadpan look,

"...Uh, is that right?"

"Th-That's right, they're pads... is that wrong?"

The princess' cheeks reddened, and she quickly faced away.

"No, it's nothing worth getting furious over, but... why did you do such a thing?"

"...To protect the Blood Stone. No one could steal it if it was within my chest. Moreover, I heard b-boys all like large breasted girls, so..."

From the start, her purpose for coming to the academy was to ensnare Kamito and make him her comrade.

...That reminded him, she had been coming and pressing her breasts on him at random, but was that for such a thing?

"No, there are also boys who like girls even if their breasts are small."

"Eh?"

For some reason, Claire's ears reacted with a twitch to Kamito's words.

"Ka-Kamito, what you said just now... is that true?"

"Yeah, after all, to each their own liking of the opposite sex. Well, personally, I think that compared to having none, having them is better... Ouch!"

At that moment, Claire's sharp whip came flying.

"Y-You, you...!"

"No, what I said just now was my personal thought. In the world, there are also many boys of such enthusiastic preference—"

"Uuu!"

Slight tears surfaced in her ruby pupils, as Claire bit her lips.

(Nevertheless, that soft feeling was the pads?...)

...He completely did not notice it. As expected, the technological level of the imperial capital couldn't be made light of.

"Although it was my plan to use that Blood Stone at the «Blade Dance» as a trump card."

Greatly lowering her volume, Fianna clasped to her breasts, as she muttered.

Although, it wasn't that they were that small. They were about normal for a girl of her age.

At the very least, they weren't deplorable breasts like Claire's—

"Uh, what?"

"...No, sorry. It was nothing."

Kamito averted his eyes in a fluster away from Claire, who was glaring sternly with her teary eyes.

Ahem, he coughed and turned towards Fianna.

"However, why did you bring such a spirit crystal?"

The spirit and part of its power, which were released from the spirit crystal, would instantly return to Astral Zero, it could not be used again.

Therefore, elementalists, who possessed contracted spirits, didn't use spirit crystals normally. After all, it was certainly more effective to use spirit magic and contracted spirits most of the time in a blade dance.

"..."

When he asked, Fianna looked downwards and calmly sighed.

"Well, it'll get exposed eventually. I'll tell you guys right here and now."

"...?"

Kamito and Claire exchanged glances at Fianna's unusually serious expression.

"—It was four years ago from now, I lost the ability to use my spirit."

Part 2

It was for this reason that while being expected as the Queen candidate next to Rubia Elstein— Fianna Ray Ordesia the second princess resigned from that position and was erased from the royal family.

That was **because she could not use her contracted spirit**.

"A princess maiden, who can't use a contracted spirit, doesn't have the qualifications to be a Queen worth serving the Elemental Lord."

Fianna looked downwards, and muttered like that in self-deprecation.

"..."

A elementalist that couldn't use her spirit was — literally— no longer an elementalist.

And the situation, where an elementalist suddenly became unable to use her spirit, wasn't something that unusual.

For example, there were cases where her body may be soiled, or the covenant made during the contract was broken— even outside of such cases, there are cases that one became unable to exchange feelings with her spirit due to some sort of emotional trauma.

In short, the exchange of feelings with the spirit was greatly dependent on the elementalist's state of mind.

What was the incident that became the cause of it— She did not even talk about anything concerning that.

Kamito didn't plan on enquiring that deeply.

(However, speaking of four years ago—)

It was that major incident that shook the Ordesia Empire.

It was the year that the Calamity Queen's— Rubia Elstein's mutiny occurred.

And then, Fianna was a princess maiden of the same « Divine Ritual Institute» as her.

She experienced that incident, which caused an emotional trauma that made her lose her spirit contract power.

A coincidence— he didn't think so.

"I'm sorry for hiding it. Although, I was thinking about telling it someday... If I was known to be unable to exchange feelings with my spirit, I would have become unable to stay in this academy."

"But, how did you pass the examination? If I'm not mistaken, there must be a practical examination."

Kamito passed exceptionally without an examination due to Greyworth's authority, but, originally, there was a strict practical examination in the academy. It was not that anyone possessing the ability of an elementalist could enter.

"I concealed several pieces of spirit crystals in my sleeves, and released them in sequence. To pretend that it was as if I was using a spirit. Since I had achievements when I was a Queen candidate of the «Divine Ritual Institute» once, they were easily deceived."

"You used valuable spirit crystals for such a dishonest entry to the academy?"

"The invigilation also would never think that there would be a person doing such a thing."

"How stupid, even if you were admitted like that, isn't it obvious that you'd be instantly exposed. For you to do such a thing, why did you come to this academy?

"That's—"

Fianna glanced towards Kamito.

Her goal was to join the team with the Strongest Blade Dancer and be victorious in the Blade Dance.

Ren Ashbell

However, he would be troubled if Claire was told that. .. Very troubled.

Thereupon, Fianna smirked in a way that only Kamito understood.

"That's to kiss Kamito-kun—"

"That's not it. Hey, Claire, stop taking out your whip."

Fianna saw Claire's eyebrow lifted up and giggled.

"It's a joke. My goal is to be victorious in the Blade dance and have my «wish» granted. To regain my lost spirit contract power."

"Everyone is the same in aiming for the victory of the Blade Dance. However, why did you think of joining our team? It's also weird for me to say this but our team has the lowest rank."

"..."

Thereupon, Fianna suddenly placed her finger on her lips as she pondered.

"...That's right. Since I thought that you guys would accept me."

It was subtly different from Fianna's usual impish tone .

"What do you mean?"

"After all, you have a male elementalist and you are the sister of the Calamity Queen. Even if the Lost Queen, who has lost her elementalist qualifications, joins in, it isn't that out of place, isn't it?"

She had that joking tone. She had a lonely expression like she was self-deprecating herself somewhere.

The reason that Fianna came to the academy and approached Kamito.

To be victorious in the Blade Dance, she would use Kamito, who was once the Strongest Blade Dancer— or so she claimed.

Ren Ashbell

However, the true reason —unexpectedly— might be more like this.

Being lonely, being a fibber, the impish princess **just wanted friends—**

"Well then, I've confessed my secret but—"

Ahem, Fianna coughed and said.

"What am I going to do? The team wouldn't need an elementalist who can't use her contracted spirit, I wonder ?"

The princess stared at Kamito and Claire in front of her with a lonely expression.

Her tone was certainly in a joking manner, but her black pupils were wavering, seemingly insecure.

And then, Claire had also probably noticed. That her fingertips were slightly quivering.

Before long—

"It doesn't matter, such a thing."

Kamito sighed.

"Fianna, you protected us by risking your life. You're our comrade."

"...!"

Fianna widened her eyes, astonished.

"Hey, is that alright?"

Kamito turned towards Claire—

"That's fine."

Claire nodded as she looked towards Fianna's chest, who had turned pale.

"Fianna, you are my comrade. Comrade of the breastless alliance."

"Don't put me together with you! I have more than you , Claire!"

"Wh-What was that!"

Gogogogogo... Claire's red hair flared up, standing on its end; and at that moment.

"...!?"

Suddenly, the ground shook.

From the almost-crumbling ceiling, fragments of rubble were dropping in large amounts.

"...An earthquake again!?"

"Don't tell me... the strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr is already about to wake up?"

"It seems so. However, as long as Jio Inzagi hasn't found the «true shrine», he shouldn't be able to completely undo the seal."

"Well then, if we could find the true shrine first—"

Claire stopped in mid-sentence and gasped in surprised.

"The seal specification materials that was stolen from the academy— the location of the true shrine might be recorded in that."

"I see! If that was the goal for him to steal the materials —"

"No, the military materials are already enciphered. Deciphering it should take time."

The one, who raised her voice, was Ellis raising half her body up from the ground.

It seemed that she woke up from the earthquake just now.

"Ellis, can you already move?"

Kamito called out to her.

"No, I still can't walk yet. It's shameful but my legs are being paralyzed by the poison."

Ellis struck her unmoving knees as she bit her lips, seemingly vexed.

"I also have not recovered to the point that I am able to fight."

This time it was Rinslet, who was leaning against the wall, raising her voice.

"Fianna, even if you lost your spirit contract power, can you dance the ritual Kagura?"

"Yes, it isn't like when I was in the «Divine Ritual Ceremony», but I can roughly enhance the resealing. As expected, I wouldn't accept a quest that I can't even do."

Fianna nodded and softly placed her hand on her chin.

"Although, we have to first find the hidden true shrine, and seize it."

"Do we have to search the inside of this vast mine...?"

In any case, it was a mine that was abandoned several decades ago. The tunnels weren't being maintained, and on top of that, there was the danger that it'll cave in easily even at a small earthquake like a while ago.

"Besides, we might encounter that Jio Inzagi again."

Everyone became silent at Claire's utterance.

He was the male elementalist, who used a countless number of spirits.

Even if the members, who boasted of having top class ability formed a group, they were also no match for him.

(He knows about Restia...)

Kamito instinctively grasped his left hand, which was covered by his leather glove.

(Who on earth is he?)

"That boy, it was as though he was like the real Demon King..."

"Uh, he was driven away by Fianna's surprise attack just now, but I don't think that could have defeated him."

Ellis nodded with a meek expression at Rinslet's murmuring.

At that moment.

"Kamito, I know the location of the true shrine."

A sound came from the sword leaning against the wall .

"Est?"

Kamito touched Est's handle, and cancelled the elemental waffe status.

The Demon Slayer became particles of light, disappeared into an empty space, and transformed into a lovely girl in a moment.

"What do you mean that you know the location of the true shrine?"

"Yes, Kamito, in the olden days more distant than when this place became a mine— several hundred years ago, this very mountain was the high ranking shrine that was used to deify spirits. I visited this place several times before I was sealed in a sword."

That was right, Est was originally a top-ranking spirit, who was sealed several hundred years ago. It was not strange even if she was deified by everyone on the sacred mountain.

"Can you guide us to the location of the true shrine?"

"Of course."

"Remarkable, Est."

"Yes, Kamito. Then, please stroke Est's head."

"Ahh."

Suri suri. *Nade nade*.

"Hn, it feels good, Kamito."

Est closed her eyes partly like a cat being stroked on its chin.

"..."

Those two—

Hyooooooo...!

The girls stared at them with a freezing-like gaze.

"Wh-What..."

"I've been thinking since before, but Kamito, don't you think you're soft on Est?"

"I-I don't think so"

He instinctively stepped back at the girls' glaring gazes .

At that moment.

"..."

It shook again. ...This time, it was even greater than a while ago.

"We had better hurry."

"Ah—"

Kamito nodded, but— he suddenly turned around and stopped.

Ellis shook her head when she realized what Kamito was thinking about.

"We're alright. While, you were unconscious, I had released and sent Simorgh to the academy. The Knights should be rushing here to aid us at dawn."

"Ellis..."

"Go, Kazehaya Kamito. We failed in our quest. I'll entrust the rest to you guys."

"It seems I am unable to fight, I will stay behind for their treatment."

"..."

Kamito tightly clenched his fist—

"...I understand. I'll come back as soon as possible."

"Let's go Kamito, Fianna."

Claire raised her Flame Tongue over her head, and blew away the mountain of rubble blocking the path.

Part 3

"—Tch, oucchh..."

His stifled groan reverberated in the tunnel walls.

Jio was loitering in the thick darkness which was twined around him as though it was his own skin.

As he placed his hand on his injured face, he walked in a ghost-like manner.

"Isn't the long-awaited handsome man ruined, huh?"

A stiff smile surfaced, as he talked into the darkness before him, and the one who replied was—

"You're over conceited, Jio Inzagi. You were negligent."

—There.

Suddenly, an even darker darkness was produced in the darkness, and took the form of a beautiful girl.

"Shut up, it's because your spirit was of no avail."

"I never thought that there would be a holy spirit user. Although Death Spirit Thanatos is at the top-rank for the darkness attribute, its compatibility is overly bad for a spirit of the holy attribute."

"—Where are they heading?"

"Probably to the «true shrine» that governs the control of strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr. As I am still tied with the bond of the contract to him, I somehow know roughly where he is."

The jet black girl preciously stroked the spirit seal that was engraved on her own left hand.

"Guide me, darkness spirit. I'll make them regret placing an injury on the Demon King's face."

"Let it go. He is the real Demon King— After all, you, who's no more than a fake, could absolutely not win. Besides, Strongest Blade Dancer has never lost to an opponent he fought once."

Ren Ashbell

"Watch your mouth, darkness spirit. **I can even make you mine right here and now**."

Jio's red eyes glared at her.

—He showed a red shiny comma-shaped jewel grasped in his hand.

"...Really, what a foolish boy."

The darkness spirit muttered disdainfully, waved her dark-colored dress, and disappeared into empty space.

Part 4

—Solid footsteps were heard in the long tunnels that went on endlessly.

The three of them were going deep down underground with Est, who was walking silently, in the lead.

It was as if the mine, which once flourished as a place for mining spirit crystals, was a giant maze. It was an excessively large passage for people to use. Large sized spirits might have been used for the digging of the bedrock.

There were many doors that used to be sealed, but they had all been opened.

It was probably the deed of Jio Inzagi's comrade, who had been carrying out the ritual at the shrine above ground.

Suddenly, Kamito's leather-gloved left hand hurt sharply.

"What's wrong, Kamito? Are your wounds hurting?"

"No, it's nothing..."

Kamito shook his head at Claire, who was peering at him anxiously.

Claire pouted her lips, dissatisfied with such a response from Kamito.

"...It somewhat feels like you are always fighting alone."

She muttered with a sigh.

"It was also like that when we were assembling a team for the tournament. No, it wasn't just that time during the match, I felt like that also when you were taking the lectures, and also when you were in the dormitory... how should I say it, shouldn't you trust me, your partner... that's not it, your master, more?"

"Is that so? ...Or rather, I don't want to be told that by you, who has no friends."

"Sh-Shut up, I do have friends!"

"Isn't it only Rinslet?"

"Sh-She's just a childhood acquaintance, it's not like she's a friend!"

"Ah, what a coincidence. I was also always alone while eating my meals when I was in the «Divine Ritual Institute»."

"Fianna, you too? ...What's with this deplorable party?"

As they were having such an endless conversation, they went down a long stairway.

"Hey, are we still not there, Est? Although, we have been walking for more than an hour since then."

"A few paths seem different since several hundred years ago. And Claire is noisy."

"Wh!"

"It can't be helped, it was even several hundred years before when Est was sealed."

"Unh, Kamito, you're on Est's side again..."

As they made progress down, down, the endless stairway— finally, they emerged out into a wide space.

Est continued walking straight, and stopped before a gigantic wall.

"Here, Kamito."

"...Here? Isn't this a dead end?"

Claire frowned suspiciously.

There was a stone wall towering over its surroundings before the four of them.

Est held up the light, and the subtle carving that was engraved on the wall's surface was reflected.

It wasn't something engraved during these several hundred years— it seemed that it was a historic ruin from the mythical age.

"This is the carving of the «Five Great Elemental Lords »... or looks like it."

The motif of the carving was quite a typical thing.

Fire, water, wind, earth, holy— The kings of the five attributes that control Astral Zero.

"Hn?"

Suddenly, Kamito felt something out of place in the design of that pattern, and frowned.

It had that composition that had the holy attribute Elemental Lord arranged at the top and a pentagram drawn.

At its bottom— It had a large scar like the wall was scraped off.

It was as unnatural as if the existence of the thing over there was erased.

Est went forward and placed her hand softly on that torn-off part.

"This is the carving of the mythical age— In the later times, Ren Ashdoll had its existence erased."

"...? Est, what did—"

The moment Kamito found fault with that, a thunderous roar reverberated in the underground tunnel .

A closed crevice of the wall slowly opened— a blue light illuminated.

"A hidden door?—"

"This is the historic ruins of the mythical age. The door can only be opened by high-ranking spirits."

Est muttered expressionlessly.

"Terrific, Est."

"Kamito, please praise me more."

"Ah, Est is remarkable."

Suri suri. *Nade nade*.

"Kamito, it feels good..."

Upon brushing the hair on her head, Est tightly closed her eyes.

"..."

Claire and Fianna glared at the two of them in that manner.

"...As I thought, you're soft towards Est."

"Kamito-kun, if we don't hurry up strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr would wake up."

"Ah, that's right..."

Drawing his hand back at Fianna strangely hurrying him, Kamito walked into the middle of the door.

—Over there, there was an unbelievably gigantic cave.

It had a polished agate floor. It had a stalactite ceiling that was inlaid with countless spirit crystals.

Each of the spirit crystals emitted a mysterious faint light, and they were dazzlingly illuminating the cave.

At the center of the large cave— there was a shrine made with precious metals and crystals.

Compared to the grand shrine above ground, it was quite small, but its solemnity was the highlight.

"—There's no doubt. Here is where this mine's «true shrine» is."

"All Fianna has to do is to dedicate a resealing ritual Kagura here, right?"

"Yes. However, before that—"

Fianna pointed at a small reservoir near the true shrine .

Clear underground water, which had trickled down from the stalactite, was being collected.

"I must do the purification ritual and cleanse my body. "

"That's right, I also want to bathe. My purity has fallen greatly due to the battle a while ago."

Claire muttered— Suddenly, she noticed Kamito's gaze.

"...Err, what should I do?"

"Y-You'll stand watch outside!"

Her whip came flying immediately.

Part 5

—*Splash*.

Claire made a lovely "Hyan" voice at the drop of water that dripped down from the ceiling's stalactite.

She had very fair skin. She had a body that depicted elegant curves. Her breasts were certainly reserved, but they were unthinkably charming even when seen by Fianna who as of the same gender.

(They are certainly sisters, she got her beauty from her sister...)

Her facial profile with her red twintails untied certainly made Fianna recall Claire's sister's face.

The Calamity Queen— Rubia Elstein.

The one who completely crushed young Fianna's heart .

It wasn't like she resented Claire, who was her sister.

(Speaking of it, I don't even understand whether or not I hate Rubia-sama...)

Etched into Fianna's heart wasn't hatred, it was just overwhelming fear.

The moment she overcame that fear, her contracted spirit would come back—

Fianna dropped her sights onto the spirit seal engraved on her chest, and was absorbed in her thoughts .

"What? Are you looking at your breasts and immersing in a sense of superiority?"

Claire was glaring at Fianna's breasts with scornful eyes.

"Eh?"

"Even without your pads, aren't yours bigger than mine? I th-thought that we're comrades."

...Claire's eyes held in them a slightly dangerous sensation.

Somehow sensing danger to her body, Fianna cut through the water surface and waded away.

Sususu. *Sususu*. *Susususu*.

Finally, she was cornered at the edge of the pond, and her shoulders were firmly grasped.

...She could not escape anymore.

"Hey, Fianna, swallow your shame, I have something I want to ask."

Claire was saying that with a serious expression.

"Wh-What?"

"A gi-girl's breasts would become big if they get the boy they like to rub them... Is that true?"

"...Eh?"

Fianna opened her mouth wide at Claire, who bashfully blushed.

And then—

A "gusu" laugh escaped spontaneously.

Before long, Fianna hugged her stomach and giggled.

"Wh-What! It isn't something that funny!"

"But I had someone ask me the exact same thing as that question in the past."

"...?"

Claire tilted her head to the side without understanding what she meant.

"You're definitely sisters."

As Fianna stifled her laughter, she wiped the tears that surfaced on her eyes.

On that subject, it had been a while since she really laughed naturally like that.

It might be... four years ago, since that day she lost her spirit contract power.

"Claire Rouge, I do not hate you."

"What do you mean?"

"Never mind. Ahh, as long as you grow to adulthood, your breasts will naturally become big."

"I-I somewhat feel irritated... In the meanwhile."

Funyuu.

Claire groped Fianna's breast.

"Kyaa, wh-what are you doing!"

"I'm confirming if they'll really become big if they're rubbed."

"Isn't it fine if you confirm that with your own breasts!"

"..., mi-mine are small and can't be properly grasped!"

"He-Hey, stop, hyaa, aan..."

Shrieks and loud water sounds were reverberated in the sacred underground shrine.

Part 6

(...I can hear those two here.)

Leaning in front of the closed wall, Kamito scratched his cheeks.

The tunnels caused more echoes than he had thought. It did not mean that he caught their conversation, but the sweet voices of the girls he heard at times were very bad for his heart.

"Kamito, are you eavesdropping on their voices, and getting excited?"

"Uh, absolutely not."

Kamito moaned with a deadpan look.

"Well then, what?"

"—Jio Inzagi, I'm thinking about that brat's true identity."

He was a male elementalist, who freely used countless spirits— in a certain way, an existence of greater heresy than Kamito.

However, Kamito was inferring his true identity to some extent from the battle some time ago.

"He isn't anything like the Demon King, if my thoughts are right."

"Of course. He is presumptuous calling himself the Demon King with that level of his."

Est answered expressionlessly, but her tone seemed a little angry.

"The successor of the Demon King— is more like Kamito."

"...? What do you mean?"

"Kamito is the Demon King of the night."

"Est, that's different."

Kamito retorted without a moment's delay.

...Honestly, where did this sword spirit learn these kind of things?

"—We've got to stop the frivolous talk here, huh?"

"It seems so."

Kamito separated his body from the wall, and grasped Est's small hand.

"Kamito is a rough master of an elementalists."

"Sorry. I will treat you to some parfait the next time at the Academy Town."

"Suddenly, my motivation came out."

Kamito made a wry smile, and recited the elemental waffe's release chant.

"Dispassionate Queen of Steel, the sacred sword that destroys evil — now form my sword"

The appearance of the lovely girl turned into particles of light and disappeared into an empty space—

In the next moment, Kamito's hand was grasping Terminus Est, which was shining in silver.

And then— footsteps resounded from deep in the darkness.

"Yo, let's settle the score and end this—
Ren Ashbell
Strongest Blade Dancer."

With his red eyes glaringly shining, Jio Inzagi showed up.

Chapter 9: Team Scarlet

Part 1

At that moment, Fianna prepared her ritual outfit and began the arrangement of the resealing.

There were violent sounds of weapons clashing outside the door of the true shine.

"—It seems that he has come."

Claire summoned her Flame Tongue and glared at the door.

"Kamito and I'll defend the door to our last. Fianna, wait here."

"Are you saying you're going to hide me in a safe place alone!?"

"Yes, he isn't an opponent on whom you can use petty tricks many times. Even if you could, you no longer have any more Blood Stones."

"Don't misjudge me, Claire Rouge. I'm not a princess, who only has to be protected. Now, I'm an equal comrade of the team."

Fianna thrust her iron-ribbed fan, used for performing the ritual dance, towards Claire.

"I am the second rank princess maiden of the «Divine Ritual Institute»— As Rubia Elstein's sister, you know that that is not a frail existence that can only perform the dance, don't you?"

She had an expression as though she was challenging her. Claire gulped at the intensity emitted by the top-ranking princess maiden.

Certainly, the princess maidens of the «Divine Ritual Institute» did not receive battle training as elementalists.

However, by no means did it mean that they were powerless. On the contrary, as long as they chose the time and place, there were cases where their power surpassed even a high-ranking elementalist.

And, this very shrine was exactly the most suited place for her to exhibit her power.

"...I get it."

Claire brushed her red twin-tailed hair up.

"I'll protect you. Perform the most supreme Kagura!"

Part 2

—There was nothing like a warning sign. The blade dance suddenly began.

There were shrilling metallic sounds. Silver sword flashes flickered, intense sparks scattered inside the cave.

Terminus Est, which was swung downwards by Kamito, was repelled by Jio's sword.

Kamito stepped further in and scythed down his sword. Jio slightly shifted his center of gravity and evaded by a paper-thin margin. He made a shrilling loud laughter, as he jumped straight up.

Like a spider, he clung onto the ceiling as—

"Huh, there's no foreplay?! Let me enjoy a little conversation, Strongest Blade Dancer!"

Ren Ashbell

"My bad, I don't have something like a chivalrous spirit— just like you!"

"...Wh!?"

Jio widened his red eyes. Kamito kicked the wall and jumped.

Terminus Est, swung in midair and struck Jio's sword.

As though metal was being forcibly scraped, a shriek resounded; and Jio's sword spirit was smashed up into many small pieces.

Kamito did not stop. He kicked the wall again, changed his course of direction and hit the side of Jio's face with his fist. He chased after Jio, who was pulled by gravity and falling to the ground, moreover, he kicked the ceiling and accelerated.

With movements like a bird hunting a prey in midair, he grabbed him by his collar, and the back of his head struck onto the ground like that.

A thick sound had reverberated. It was a strike without any mercy.

He threw a punch again with movements like a precision instrument— but at that moment.

Jio's right hand's spirit seal glowed. Sensing danger, he immediately jumped aside from on top of Jio.

At that moment, a silver sword-shaped flash emitted from Jio's palm.

What appeared in Jio's hand was a new elemental waffe.

It was a narrow sword attached with an ornament. It was a stabbing sword, called a rapier, used exclusively for thrusting.

Kamito retreated and put some distance between them . He prepared Terminus Est in both hands.

Ren Ashbell

"As expected of Strongest Blade Dancer— What absurd movements."

"A high-order multi-sided movement in a closed environment— The first technique to be trained at the « Instructional School». **But I wasn't doing it that thoroughly as you**."

"..."

Jio kept silent.

"Just now, I understood it when our swords clashed. You are the same as me, an orphan of the «Instructional School»— **A failure of the Demon King**."

Instructional School— That was the name of the institution, where Kamito received training as an assassin when he was a child.

It was a secret training institution established by some nobles. There, they collected girls who possessed the qualities of an elementalist from orphanages all over the continent in order to raise a group of superior assassins.

At first, the establishment was supposed to be an agency for supplying assassins to their noble colleagues. However, the teachers of Instructional School became independent of the nobles before they knew it, and it had become something to embrace a monologue fanatic creed .

—Namely, the second coming of the Demon King.

He was the only male elementalist in history.

He was a Demon King, who used seventy-two spirits and led the continent to ruins.

It was to create his successor.

For that reason, the measures they took were very simple.

He was the only male elementalist left in history— If that was the case, it was natural that his successor had to be a boy.

With that thought, they collected boys who were deemed to have the ability to even slightly exchange feelings with spirits, and conducted hypnotism, drug administration, spirit possession experiments and so forth. However, the success rate should have been nil.

For this reason, the moment when Kamito was discovered eight years ago, those guys had been in ecstasy.

"—Correct."

Jio Inzagi expressed an extremely dreadful smile.

"The experiment of the Demon King's second coming by the hands of man— Its very first success is me."

Kamito—

Distorted his mouth cynically, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Its very first success? Are you joking?"

"I understand your feelings of not wanting to acknowledge it. Nevertheless, this isn't a joke."

"I do not mean it like that."

Kamito shook his head like he was commiserating.

"A male elementalist, who uses seventy-two contracted spirits— if that was considered a success, then you are **absolutely not a success, you know**."

"...What?"

Jio's red eyes widened, and his expression distorted in hatred.

"I too was fooled at first. Whether you were really using seventy-two contracted spirits. —However, I was wrong."

Kamito indifferently informed him.

"Your spirits aren't contracted spirits. —They're all sealed spirits."

"...!"

That's right— The spirits, that Jio Inzagi was using, were not spirits that had exchanged the ritual of contract.

They were spirits that were sealed and treated as equipment for the seals engraved on his body.

The reason Kamito realized that was that Jio never used the same spirit twice.

(...Besides, he was also using several sword spirits of the same type.)

Unless one planned on using and throwing them away from the start, there was no point in contracting a large quantity of sword spirits in that way. Compared to

handling several sword spirits, it should be much more efficient to nurture one sword spirit.

Besides, no matter how powerful Est's elemental waffe was, it was strange that a sword spirit, famous for being the toughest in its endurance, was broken that easily.

"...My point is that they're the same as the spirit crystal that Fianna had used and thrown away."

As long as the ritual of contract was not exchanged, a spirit could not even be nurtured, and its true power as an elemental waffe also could not be drawn out.

The divine power that he thought was inexhaustible was also a mere illusion.

"You are a fake Demon King, Jio Inzagi. No, you're not even an elementalist."

Certainly, while he housed that many sealed spirits in his body, the fact that he could maintain his body was a definite success. If he was an ordinary person, he was sure to go crazy because of the spirits' rejection.

However, it was greatly incomplete for him to call himself the Demon King— an elementalist.

He pretended as if he was contracted with several spirits, it was no more than a deception.

"...Huh, so what?"

Jio's red eyes shone glaringly, and he spat out.

"Even if you know that, there's no changing the fact that you can't beat me!"

Jio kicked the ground. The rapier sword spirit accelerated like it exploded in his hand.

"I'm the Demon King! That verification will be achieved by killing— Strongest Blade Dancer, you!"

Ren Ashbell

Just before reaching Kamito, he ducked to lower his body, aimed for Kamito's throat, and launched a thunderous thrust.

Kamito slightly turned his head and avoided it. Turning about on his pivot leg, he returned with a counter kick.

His sole gouged Jio's chest. Continuing the momentum , Kamito held aloft Est overhead.

Barguest

"—, Manifest, flame wolf spirit!"

Jio's arm's seal glowed— at that moment, a blazing flame fang attacked Kamito.

It was a lava hound, clad in black flames. The flame fang bit his left arm that was raised overhead.

Intense pain coursed through his whole body, as though his blood was boiling. However—

"...Raaaa!"

Kamito rotated, swung his arm, and smashed the lava hound that was biting him into a wall.

The flame exploded and scattered. There were smashed up lava rocks. If it was a contracted spirit, it would go back again to protect its master— however, a sealed spirit, which was only forcefully released, vanished into empty space as it was.

"How lukewarm... Claire's flames are much hotter!"

An extremely dreadful smile surfaced, and Kamito immediately swung Terminus Est horizontally.

Jio's posture was slightly crumbled by the wind pressure— that chance of a moment was not overlooked by Kamito.

Holding the silver shiny sword up overhead, he launched a strike with all his might—

"—Manifest, shield (Aegis) spirit!"

However, that strike was stopped by the shield spirit Jio released.

Sword spirit against shield spirit— even for Est, the attribute compatibility was overly poor!

However, Kamito did not draw back. Without change — he further pushed the sword in.

"—Let's go Est, show me just how serious you can be!"

Responding to Kamito's shout, Teminus Est's light glowed brighter.

The brightness became a long flash and covered the sacred sword—

At that moment, it changed its appearance to a gigantic sword that far exceeded Kamito's stature.

"Wh...at!?"

"Oooooooo!"

Kamito roared. He set a crack into the released shield spirit.

And then— It was smashed right in half!

"This is absurd... A sword spirit destroyed a shield spirit!?"

"This is the power of a contracted spirit bound by the spirit seal— Jio Inzagi!"

Kamito held the large sword overhead again, at that moment—

"... You bastaarrd!"

(—What?)

Clutched within the hand that Jio stuck out, **was a shiny red comma-shaped jewel**.

The moment Kamito saw that jewel, an indescribable chill ran down his spine.

Terminus Est in his hand weakly shook.

The moment her blade touched the surface of the jewel —

Pishi— a small crack developed on Est's blade.

"...!?"

Demon Slayer

The Demon King Killing Sacred Sword lost its dazzling brightness.

From the place the crack was developed, something like a black stain was spreading—

(—, Est is being corroded!?)

Kamito tried to draw back Est, and at that moment.

Jio sneered at him.

"I had said that that was your weakness— Ren Ashbell ."

"Guu...!"

The released rapier had pierced the side of Kamito's abdomen.

As Kamito grasped Est, who was being varnished black, he went down on his knees at that spot.

"You can't accept spirits as tools. Therefore, you are weak."

Jio calmly stood up while playing with the red shiny comma-shaped jewel in one hand.

"That spirit crystal is... don't tell me—"

"Ahh?... That's right. That princess was holding the same thing."

"A Blood Stone...?"

It was a national-level treasure that could seal the power of a top-ranking spirit.

(Why does he have—)

"That's right. This very thing is the source of my power — the power of mad king Nebuchadnezzar spirit that rules over many spirits."

Jio loudly laughed with the jewel in his hand, and the seals engraved on his whole body ominously emitted a glow.

"..., I see, the reason you were using that many sealed spirits was the power of the high-ranking spirit that was sealed in that jewel."

In contrast to the Blood Stone which Fianna had possessed which had its releasing done, it seemed that the one Jio had, manifested its effect just by being attached onto his body.

"...What a complete fake. What an unthinkable Demon King-sama."

"You have the gall to say that, I'll make your sword spirit mine right here and now—"

The black stain was encroaching Terminus Est. Jio's loud laughter resounded within the cave.

However, a faint smile surfaced at Kamito's lips.

"Jio Inzagi, do you know? This tunnel reverberates voices well."

"Ahh? What are you saying—"

"Why do you think I was specially lecturing you about the true form of your magic tricks?"

"What?"

That's right, it did not mean that he was having a pointless talk.

Kamito was doing it to convey information.

That the spirits he used were not contracted spirits, but just sealed spirits.

"Don't misunderstand. The one you're fighting isn't Strongest Blade Dancer."

Ren Ashbell

At that moment, Flame Tongue that was let loose coiled around Jio's right hand.

"—It's Team Scarlet."

"...!?"

The door to the true shrine was opened. There—

Brushing up her red twin-tailed hair, and holding Flame Tongue in her hand, Claire Rouge was standing.

"You did well, Kamito. As expected of my slave spirit!"

"Why you..."

Pressing onto his side abdomen injury, Kamito groaned with a deadpan look.

Jio shook off Flame Tongue, and glared at Claire.

"Huh, thank you— You opened the true shrine's door especially for me."

"Yes, to defeat you."

There was a voice coming from behind Claire.

Fianna, who had put a solemn ritual costume on her body, was calmly walking.

Even for a girl, who had acted like an imp, she wasn't a powerless girl frightened with fear.

Standing rigidly— was a white robed Queen.

"I'll show it to you. The ritual Kagura of the Empire's second princess, Fianna Ray Ordesia."

Part 3

Four years ago. That day— the girl's heart had been completely broken.

Being beat by the overwhelming fear and the sense of helplessness, she became unable to use her spirit.

To become a splendid Queen like Rubia-sama— The girl, who was cut off from that dream, had already lost it.

It became that her parents, even her sisters, and even the court ladies ignored her as they quickly changed their attitude.

The attitude of the girl, who was overly strict with herself and others, seemed to have incurred enmity before she knew it.

Therefore, the moment that the fact that she lost her power was known, it became that no one would care for her.

Before she knew it, it became like the girl closed her heart towards everything.

Without opening her heart to anyone, without embracing any interest— she had been secluding herself inside the castle.

—However, it was three years ago. The girl met her.

The Strongest Blade Dancer, who was advancing through the Blade Dance with overwhelming strength.

The girl became engrossed with her blade dance that blew away everything.

She felt like her blade dance had changed something.

Once again, she was given the strength to stand up.

(Kamito-kun, the real reason that I came to this academy— I feel like I understand it now.)

As long as she was alone, she would not have noticed it.

The things like the «wish» attained because of the Blade Dance might be truly inconsequential to her.

With just her, who she admired.

With the boy from that day, it might be just that she wanted to fight together.

(...Kamito-kun, you had said that I am your comrade.)

Even when he knew that she couldn't use her contracted spirit, he had said that.

(Besides, Claire Rouge... She also had come in contact with me without being different.)

Four years ago, that time when she stood against the Calamity Queen, she was just alone.

However, now— she had comrades that she had to protect.

Holding her iron-ribbed fan in both hands, Fianna Ray Ordesia danced the Kagura.

—(Dance, you many spirits, be released from that binding body, and dance wildly together with me!)

She was the second ranked princess maiden of the only Queen training institution in the continent— « Divine Ritual Institute».

That Kagura she was dancing was not a combat support dance that strengthened spirits.

Hearing Kamito and Jio's conversation that could be heard from the other side of the wall, she knew it intuitively.

Kamito had conveyed the things she could do as a Kagura dance expert.

If supposed that Jio Inzagi's spirits were mere sealed spirits—

To stamp their feet like time ticking away and move vigorously with stream-like movements.

Those were the perfect dance movements that they were trained in at the «Divine Ritual Institute» before they learned words.

"The seventh ritual of the ritual Kagura— The ritual of the mad banquet, I'll dedicate it here!"

Part 4

"Ga...Aaah, ah, ah... you bastard, what did you do to meeee!"

Suddenly, Jio Inzagi's body twisted and fell to the ground.

Both arms were twisted in impossible orientations, and the seals of his whole body flickered violently.

"Your sealed spirits are going on a rampage. They're reacting to Fianna's dedicated ritual Kagura."

Kamito slowly stood up with Terminus Est in his hand .

"What...was that...!"

"Listen, your body that housed sealed spirits is something like a shrine that deifies many spirits."

He shrugged his shoulders as he told him.

"Furthermore, they were certainly not contracted spirits that were bound by a bond. Because of that jewel's power, they are just sealed spirits that were forcefully made to obey. There's no way that they would not be affected by an interference from outside— like the effect of Fianna's dedicated Kagura."

"Guu... Damn, gaaaa!"

Jio yelled, faced towards Fianna, who was dancing the Kagura at the true shrine, and released spirits.

Five spirits of varying attributes became entangled, and rushed in a squirming manner.

That—

"It's useless."

Claire, who was standing before the door, gathered and knocked them down with her Flame Tongue.

"I'm sorry but something like spirits that lost control can't even be an opponent for me."

"Guu... haa..."

With his body's freedom stolen by the rampaging sealed spirits, Jio's body violently convulsed.

"I'll take you under our custody. And, we'll have you speak about the incident on the strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr."

Kamito approached him to apprehend him, at that moment.

"—That'll be troubling, Kamito."

From an empty space, a clear girl's voice was heard.

In front of Kamito, who stopped his feet spontaneously, thick darkness appeared.

"...!?"

It was that pleasant voice, which he would never forget.

Before long, the darkness, which was born from empty space, transformed into the appearance of a beautiful girl .

"Jio is a precious experimental body. It would be troubling for you to take him arbitrarily."

"Restia..."

Kamito groaned like he was squeezing it out from the inside of his throat.

She was his former contracted spirit— that lovely appearance of hers, which had not changed in a single way from three years ago.

Despite that Kamito had changed so much.

"You, you're the darkness spirit from that day."

"Long time no see, hell cat ojou-san."

The girl sweetly waved her hand at Claire, who was taken aback and had shouted.

"...Restia, is it you? The one trying to release strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr."

He had a premonition— a premonition that she was involved behind the scene of this incident.

There was the fact that Jio Inzagi knew Kamito's true identity.

And then, there were the darkness spirits that were holding a ritual at the shrine above ground.

Above all else, the throbbing from the spirit seal, which was engraved on his left hand, was telling him of her presence.

The lovely darkness spirit made a lonely smile and nodded.

"That's right. It's my mission to release the spirit sleeping here."

"Why are you doing..."

"Because that's her desire. That's all."

"...Her?"

"Kamito, you'll eventually meet her. However, it's not now. You have not awakened yet."

"Restia, I—"

—At that moment, Jio, who had fallen to the ground, roared.

"Move aside, darkness spirit. I have not lost yet!"

"Give it up. I've said it, haven't I? You can't even beat the current him."

"Shut up, I'm-I'm the one, who will succeed the Demon King! To be beaten at..."

"You are not the Demon King. You're not even an elementalist, you're just a failure."

The darkness spirit girl said in a cold tone.

"After all, the one, who will succeed the Demon King, is—"

"..., Shut up, shut up shut up shut up, you bratsssssss!"

Suddenly, Jio, who shouted, grabbed the darkness spirit's ankle with his hand.

He stood up like that, and hung Restia upside down.

"Jio, what are you trying to do!?"

"To thank you. I am going to use you, darkness spirit!"

Jio loudly laughed with a face filled with madness.

A shiny deep crimson comma-shaped jewel was tightly grasped in one of his hand. That—

Was struck onto the ground near his feet.

"Wh!?"

"Ha, hahahaha, ha! This is the power of the Demon King, who coercively rules over even the high ranking darkness spirit!"

The deep crimson Blood Stone made a shrill crushing sound and was smashed up.

Nebuchadnezzar

The power of mad king spirit poured out, became a feeler of shadow and swallowed the darkness spirit's body.

"Restia!"

Enraged, Kamito swung Terminus Est,

However, that slash, which was charged and released with the strength of all his might— did not cut and tear Jio apart.

A gigantic jet-black demon sword was grasped in Jio's hand.

That had stopped Terminus Est's blade, and was absorbing her radiance.

"That's... don't tell me, Restia's—!?"

It was her elemental waffe—
The sword that pierces the truth. (Vorpal Sword)

Its shape was certainly different, but that was no other than the demon sword, which the once
Strongest Blade Dancer (Ren Ashbell) was using.

"Scarlet!"

Claire shouted.

Aiming at Jio, who was madly laughing loudly, the scorching hell cat rushed on at him.

"Small fry, do not hinder the Demon Kinnggg!"

Losing his composure, Jio swung the jet-black demon sword.

Forcing back Kamito's sword— countless black lightning attacks were released from its blade.

"Kyaa!"

"Claire!"

Claire screamed, as her petite body was blown away.

"Jio Inzagi!"

Kamito roared, and swung down Terminus Est again.

"You too— Dieeeeee!"

Facing Kamito, who was rushing at him from the front , he released the black lightning attack.

It was one long lightning attack that had several times the power of the previous one.

It was directly aimed at and converged on Kamito—

"Like such a thing will hit—"

"**—It'll hit**."

Jio expressed a ferocious smile.

Just before dodging, Kamito realized it.

Fianna was behind him.

Part 5

Fianna was staring at the assailing black lightning attack dumbfounded.

She could not dodge it. The heavy ritual costume had stolen her body's freedom.

(...Am I going to die here?)

The girl's chest was filled with a calm resignation. She reflexively closed her eyes.

However—

"Fianna!"

She was taken aback by that.

When she opened her eyes, Kamito had caught the rampaging lightning attack with his sword.

"Kamito-kun!?"

"Ooooooooo!"

While his whole body was being struck by the lightning attack, Kamito went forward.

Ren Ashbell

Strongest Blade Dancer, the one who had performed a splendid blade dance at the venue of the Blade Dance.

Was protecting Fianna in a tattered condition.

Even though he became bloody and was even barely standing.

"No, Kamito-kun! You're going to die—"

"I never want to lose it again. My precious comrades."

"...!"

His back was the same as that day three years ago.

It belonged to the boy, who had saved a powerless girl in the forest of Astral Zero.

It was the back of the boy, who she first fell in love with— And it was right in front of her eyes!

(This time I have to protect—)

Ba-thump. A hot emotion was filling Fianna's chest.

(—I want to protect **him, the one who I love**.)

Since that day— she had always been alone.

Without being needed by anyone, without anyone accompanying her, she was the Lost Queen.

Without anything to expect, she had given up on everything.

(—However, it's different now.)

She saw Ren Ashbell's blade dance three years ago.

And then, now she was looking at Kazehaya Kamito's back.

(—I've changed! After all, I have a wish I want granted !)

She wanted to aim for the «Blade Dance» together with Kamito.

(That was— my real wish.)

The black lightning attack was pushing back and covering the light from Terminus Est held by Kamito.

His body seemed like it was going to collapse at any time. However, he was still standing.

"—Thou, servant of the king of the child of man, knight and master swordsman!"

Fianna's lips spun the spirit language summoning majestically.

"—By the contract of the old blood, become the sword that protects me, come forth and do my bidding! "

A nostalgic feeling was resurrected in her chest.

It was the sensation that should have been lost four years ago— The throbbing of the spirit seal.

The princess' knight, which had not responded no matter how many times it was called since that day, was now—

"Come forth, holy knight spirit «Georgios»— Thou shalt become the sword that protects me!"

A dazzling light overflowed before her eyes.

It was the holy light that cleansed all darkness. It was the light that had been always protecting Fianna.

The armored knight, armed with a silver sword and a large shield, was standing before her.

It was the holy knight spirit, handed down in the Ordesia Empire— «Georgios».

There was no need for words. Fianna gently smiled at that nostalgic appearance.

A holy attribute spirit was a spirit that could only be used by a princess maiden possessing an absolutely pure soul.

Fianna, who had etched into her chest the pain of the past and yet recovered—

Was now recognized as the true master.

"I command you in the name of the Ordesia Empire's second princess— Protect Kamito-kun!"

Fianna, cloaked with the majesty of a queen, placed her hand at her waist and ordered it.

The holy knight spirit nodded without a word and brandished its large sword, which was approximately as long as its height.

Making an underground rumbling, like the ground was shaking, it rushed into the raging black lightning attack.

"—Why you, are you defying the Demon King!"

Jio Inzagi shouted. The lightning attack became a rushing stream and surged forward.

However— «Georgios» rushed onwards in the face of that.

The black lightning attack was being repelled by the shield it held aloft.

A high ranking holy spirit had full resistance against the darkness attribute.

Its large knightly sword cut and cleansed the darkness, and cleared the path in front of Kamito!

"Wh...at...!?"

Jio's face distorted with shock— Kamito didn't overlook that opportunity.

"Let's go, Est!"

Kamito drove in all the divine power he had into Terminus Est.

Demon Slayer

The Demon King Killing Sacred Sword, which was swallowed up in darkness and lost its light, shone brightly once more.

"Oooooooo!"

Kamito ran with Terminus Est, who became a gigantic sword, in his hand.

"Tch— Manifest, flame spirit!"

Aiming at Kamito, who was plunging towards him from the front, Jio released the flame spirit—

"I won't let you!"

Hyun— A red killing flash occurred and swallowed that flame.

Claire, who was covered with injuries, was standing with her Flame Tongue in her hand.

"—I told you, we are a team."

As he plunged towards Jio's chest, Kamito told him.

"Therefore, I'll continue to grow strong. Stronger than the time I was called Strongest Blade Dancer."

Ren Ashbell

And then— Kamito's single hit cut off the fake Demon King's arm.

Epilogue

—The next morning, Kamito woke up on a bed in the medical office.

He, honestly, didn't remember much about what happened after that.

He had over-used his divine power in using Est, and his consciousness had become hazy.

Jio Inzagi was apprehended by the Sylphid Knights of the academy, who had rushed over, and was handed over to the Ordesia military as the suspect of the incident . That fake Demon King, who lost his Blood Stone's power, no longer had any power to resist.

The strategic-class militarized spirit Jormungandr, which was sleeping under the mine, was resealed without problems by Fianna holding the ritual Kagura of resealing. The shrine, above ground, was also completely destroyed by the Knights. There should never be another chance for it be released.

The darkness spirit Restia had disappeared the moment Jio's arm was cut off.

That did not mean that she vanished— That was what the throbbing of the spirit seal, engraved on his left hand, had told him.

(Restia, what on earth are you trying to do?)

(—Because that was her wish.)

His former contracted spirit said that. And then, that he would meet (her) eventually.

Who was this "her" she had mentioned? Was she possibly referring to the (other) Ren Ashbell who was participating in this round's Blade Dance?—

(In any case, as long as we advance, we should be able to fight her.)

Their school ranking greatly went up due to the S-rank quest achievement this time, but there were still many high ranking teams. Besides, even if they reached the « Blade Dance», the elite champion teams would be selected, not only from this academy, but from every country of the continent.

(This isn't the time to be lying down here...)

Making a bitter smile, Kamito tried to get up from the bed, at that moment.

A soft sensation was squirming about from under the sheet.

"...E-Est! You again—"

He flipped up the sheet in a fluster.

A nude Est—

—wasn't on the bed.

"...Fianna?"

Kamito left his mouth open.

The one who was there, was Fianna, who was wearing a dress-like uniform on her body.

"How disappointing, I already got discovered. Despite that I was thinking of playing various things after this."

The princess brushed up her glamorous black hair, and cutely stuck out her tongue.

Being peered at by a hair-raising upward glance, his face spontaneously turned red.

"Wh-Wh-Wh-What are you doing?!"

"Fufu, do you know that a princess maiden of the « Divine Ritual Institute» knows various techniques to let spirits enjoy themselves?"

"Y-You, what do you plan on doing..."

"I'm joking. However, look, do you feel that your vitality is recovering?"

"...? Yes, certainly...!"

He felt some sort of energy swelling up in his whole body. Normally, his divine power shouldn't have recovered this much just by resting for about a day.

"It was a secret ritual Kagura of the «Divine Ritual Institute» to distribute a princess maiden's divine power—However, to use it, our skin must be closely stuck together. If you're offended, I'm sorry."

Fianna quickly blushed, and bashfully looked downwards.

"You're not thinking that I'm an im-immodest girl, right? Even I'm really... embarrassed."

"I-I'm sorry... Thank you. However, you don't have to force yourself."

Kamito apologized in a fluster.

She was pretending to be mature, but she was really an innocent princess. After making her this worried, he could not tell her to move aside.

"I'm not forcing myself. I'm doing it because I l-like it."

Fianna quickly turned away with her face still red.

"...Hey, Fianna, is it really alright for you to not return to the «Divine Ritual Institute»?"

The reason that she tried to participate in the Blade Dance should have been to regain the power of her contracted spirit by the «wish» granted to the victor.

That «wish» had already come true, so— there was already no meaning to stay in this academy.

"It isn't possible to return after all this time. Besides, you know—"

Fianna brushed up her long black hair, and gently brought her face close.

"I have another «wish» I want granted."

"What? What's your another wish?"

"It's a secret—"

There was a soft sensation on his cheek.

As her cherry-blossom lips pecked, it touched and softly left.

"...You haven't given up on ensnaring me, have you?"

Kamito groaned with a deadpan look.

"Yes, that's right. This time I'm serious."

The princess expressed an impish smile— and, at that moment.

Gacha— The room's door had opened.

"Ka-Kamito!?"

A red twin-tail bounced.

It was Claire who was carrying a large amount of peach canned food.

...It seemed like she had come to visit him.

She saw Kamito, who was entangled with Fianna on the bed.

Gogogogogogogogogogo...!

"Y-Yo-You two, wh-wh-what are you doing..."

"Wait, it's a misunderstanding. Because this isn't what you think..."

"Oh, Kamito-kun, what's being misunderstood?"

Fianna tightly stuck close to Kamito's body.

"Wh-Why are you making such a pretense, it's like throwing firewood into the mouth of a volcano!?"

"...Scarlet, burn them!"

"Georgios, chase that noisy girl out!"

At that moment, the hellcat and the armored knight appeared from empty space.

While the hellcat looked intimidating, the knight unsheathed its sword.

"Hey, stop, this is a sickroom—"

Such a shout from Kamito was erased in vain by the violent sound of weapons clashing.

The peaceful sickroom transformed into a battleground for a blade dance within a moment.

Afterwords

Author's

—Do you dislike an immodest princess?

With this, it has been about two months of silence. This is Shimizu Yuu. I present you the second installment of the academy harem x battle comedy "Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance", where swords, spirits and beautiful girls dance boisterously.!

Fianna, who moved into Raven Class, is the Ordesia Empire's former princess. She, who somehow knew Kamito's past, came intruding into Claire's room—

…Yes, I somewhat feel the premonition of a dreadful fighting scene (shivers).

A moral-less battle of the tsundere hellcat girl and the ero-cute princess. A mysterious enemy calling himself the successor of the Demon King. And then, the secret, which Fianna—who was called the Lost Queen—was hiding in her chest, is—?

The deplorable ojou-sama Rinslet, the pony-tail beautiful girl Ellis, nude knee-sock spirit Est also were involved, and the battles and the romance comedy are also delivered in a greatly increased amount!

Now then, this is a volume series that I started at the end of last year but thanks to you, the sales were satisfactory, and additional printing had been decided immediately after its launch. Everyone, who bought them, I really thank you!

"Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance" is something I aimed to write without thinking of something complicated while being interesting as a light novel and amazingly enjoyable. After this, I'll also be earnestly pushing on steadily, so thank you!

Thanks time. First is Sakura Hanpen-sensei, who drew wonderful illustration without a break for one volume, really thank you very much. Each and every character designs, which goes without saying, the facial expressions and gestures are cute. Especially, the destructive power of frontispiece of Est is tremendous. And then, Fianna in the front cover is very … ero-cute!

The black panther (in the meaning that his coat has a leopard-design) Koto Shouji-sama, I've always been grateful to you. I've really already ran out of gratitude words. I also look forward to working with you on the organizing of the team battles!

Chief editor Misaka, proofreading team, binding team, sales teams and the bookstores, really thank you for everything. Especially, the new retailers Anibro Gamers, who had done the hot unfolding of a blade dance roadshow. I had the privilege of seeing it personally, and was overwhelmed by its force. Thank you, thank you.

And then, my number one thanks goes to all you readers holding this book in your hands. For the series to be able to be delivered like this, it's thanks to all you readers' support.

Everyone, who sent in questionnaires, I've carefully read your thoughts. It was truly encouraging, so, I'll happy if you send them one after another!

I'll also keep at it writing for volume three, so thank you very much.

The battle with pollens is from here on!

January 2011, Shimizu Yuu

Illustrator's

■初めまして、またはお久しぶりです桜はんぺんです!
2巻目です、わーパチパチ!!　新キャラのフィアナちゃんです。
個人的にちょっとヤンデレ入ってて凄く可愛いです…。
そんな勝手なフィアナちゃん感想です。ヤンデレ結構好きです。

志瑞先生ペロペロ権をGETするために、次回もがんばります…!
次はスカーレットのいやらシーンを書いてみたいと思ったのですが
確実に無理だとおもうのでM字開脚しておきました!

それではそんなかんじで2巻は終了です!
3巻でお会いしましょう!

Nice to meet you, or perhaps, long time no see, this is Sakura Hanpen!

This is the 2nd volume, Wah, *Clapping*!! This is the new character, Fianna-chan.

Personally, she has a little yandere in her, and is very cute...

That's my own impression of Fianna-chan. I quite like yandere.

In order to get the right to lick Shimizu-sensei, I'll also do my best the next time...!

I thought of trying to draw Scarlet's naughty scene next, but

I thought it was really impossible, so I had her made the M letter with her legs spread out!

Well then, just like this, the second volume had ended!

Let's meet at the third volume!

References and Translation Notes

1. ↑ Furigana 101: Meaning(Reading)
2. ↑ simmering sfx.
3. ↑ Aero as in Aerodynamic (ie: aerodynamically shaped to reduce air resistence, like how cars or airplanes are shaped).
4. ↑ See Magatama.